

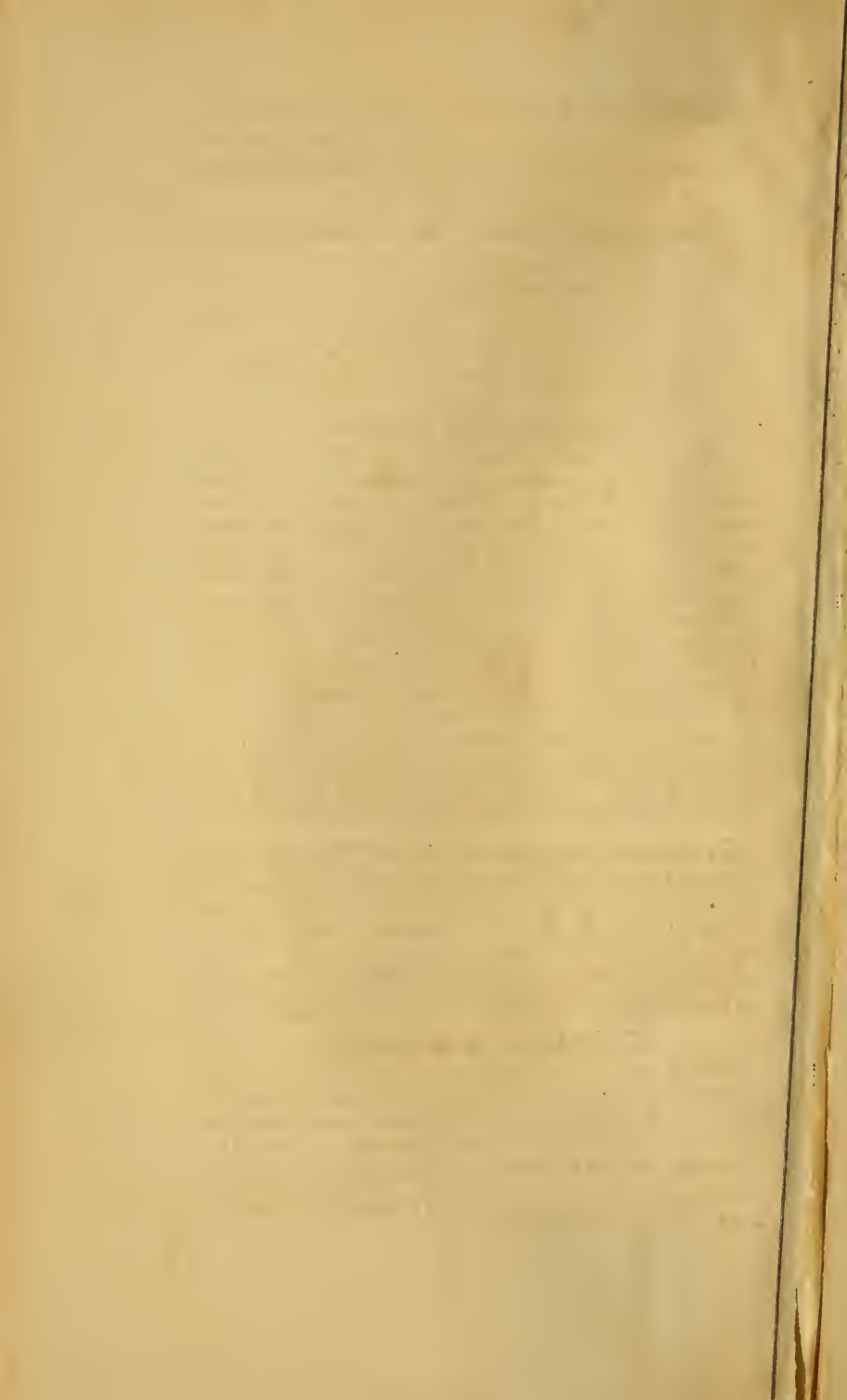


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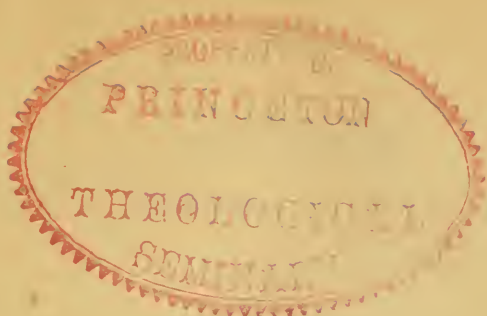
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ERRATA.

- Vol. I. Page 16, *dele* the Note, and Vid. p. 200.
 — 55, *insert*, in line 30, after monarchy. Obs. 6.
 — 148, *dele*, in line 6, each.
 — 179, *read*, ever mindful, *for* never unmindful.
 — 203, *read*, in line 22, aptly *for* apply.
 — 288, *read*, in line 21, eternal *for external*.
-
- Vol. II. — 2, *read*, in line 22, *his* might *for their* might.
 — 44, *insert*, in line 12, *out* after *fallen*.
 — 48, *read*, in line 1, latter *for* later.
 — 79, *read*, in line, 20, Obs. 3. *for* Obs. 7.
 — 96, *dele*, in line 23, the comma after *Apollodori*.
 — 117, *read*, in line 31, theocratical *for* theocritical.
 — 121, *read*, in line 20, נציב.
 — ————— 21, מוצבה.
 — ————— 23, נציב.
 — 128, *read*, in line 12, itself *for* himself.
 — 142, *read*, in line 25, the former *for* these.
 — 182, *read*, in line 9, last *for* first.
 — 255, *read*, in line 28, Jehoiachin *for* Jehoiakim.
 — 256, *read*, in line 12, Jehoiachin *for* Jehoiakim.
 — 320, *insert*, in line 26, the throne of *after* establish.
 — 321, *read*, in line 14, like thy people *for* like thee.
 — 321, *put*, in line 33, ! *for* ?
 — 323, *read*, in line 2, to be bent like a reed *for* like to a bent reed.

PREFACE

TO VOLUME SECOND.

THE Translator has said, in his preface to the first volume, that anxiety to promote the study of the Old Testament in its original language, was his principal motive for undertaking the irksome task of the translation of this book. In pursuance of the same object, he now begs leave to make a few observations on a prejudice still prevailing, which he believes to be one of the chief obstacles to the full and *general* acquisition of the Hebrew language.

The prejudice alluded to, is, that this language should be learned *from the first*, according to the Masoretic system of punctuation. The Hebrew language in itself, without the Masoretic points, is, in point of structure, the simplest which can be conceived, and its words are not numerous; and, therefore, it is of very easy acquisition, comparatively with most other languages. Its words are, indeed, more numerous than is supposed by those not acquainted with

it, and it is by no means deficient in copiousness: but all these words are derived from a comparatively small number of roots, according to a few simple rules, from which there are not many deviations. Hence, it must be evident that a diligent student, in a short space of time, will easily master it. But, by the addition of the Masoretic system of punctuation and accentuation, derived from the highly metaphysical and trifling turn of the Masorites, or later Jewish Rabbis, prone, in an absurd degree, to occupying themselves about minutiae, the language becomes very complex and difficult, and, consequently, far from being easy to be acquired. This indeed is so much the case, that it is not perhaps too much to say, that as great knowledge of the unpointed language may be acquired in six months, as of the pointed language in as many years. Now, if this be true, or even if it be any approximation to the truth, undoubtedly every candid person must acknowledge the propriety of acquiring this language, *in the first instance*, in the manner presenting so many fewer difficulties. And let no one think that this will be any obstacle to the student acquiring afterwards a complete knowledge of the Masoretic system; for, on the contrary, when he has fully mastered the unpointed language, he will find this, comparatively, a very easy task. For it is by no means

intended to recommend the neglect of the Masoretic system, or a disregard of the interpretation put by these laborious Rabbis on their Scriptures, to which, undoubtedly, in many cases, due attention ought to be paid. But what we intend to urge on the student is, to begin with the very easy and pleasing task of the study of the pure and unsophisticated word of God, and afterwards to proceed to the study of the Masoretic interpretation, for *interpretation only it is*, and make use of it in its proper place, as he does of the other ancient versions, to assist him in understanding the sacred volume.

In the minds of not a few, there seems to exist an opinion that the Hebrew language is, in some degree, deficient or incomplete without the Masoretic punctuation, which idea is perhaps a remain of the ancient exploded opinion of the great antiquity of the pointed system. There is, however, not the least ground for this supposition. For the syntax, the principal and most important part of every language, is in no respect affected by the points. *It is quite the same in the pointed and the unpointed text.* And we may remark here, that it is a subject of deep regret, that many of the shorter grammars of this language in use, are miserably deficient in this most essential, and indeed, paramount part of language; a defect originating probably in the

notion that there are in Hebrew but few established syntactical rules or usages. This appears to us a great and fatal mistake, arising from a very partial and incomplete knowledge of this beautiful, though very simple tongue. For the more one becomes correctly acquainted with it, the more will he be convinced that it is as strict in this respect, and has, perhaps, as few deviations from true syntactical principles, as even the more polished languages.

It is of great importance to the student that he should be fully aware in what respects the language is affected by the Masoretic points and accents. These we shall now very briefly endeavour to state.

The chief of these is, in its pronunciation. It will not, we apprehend, be denied by any one, that in this respect the Masoretic pronunciation approaches nearer to the true pronunciation of the ancient language, than that which must and should be adopted in reading the unpointed text. Every candid person must, however, acknowledge that the pronunciation of a language is valuable principally for the purpose of conversing with, or speaking to others, and for the sake of feeling the rhythm of the poetry. But, in order to answer these purposes, it must be correct, or nearly so. It cannot, however, be contended by any but the most prejudiced, that the Masoretic pronunciation is that of the ancient He-

brews. This, indeed, could not have been expected by any one who considers, that at the time when the Masorites began to attach their points, the Hebrew had been a dead language for above 700 years, if not considerably more ; and for no small portion of this time, even in Judea, the Scriptures themselves had been generally read in other languages. But what seems to settle this point is, that it is now acknowledged on all hands, that it is impossible to acquire any satisfactory knowledge of the system on which the rhythm or prosody of Hebrew poetry was founded. This must, in its very nature, wholly depend on pronunciation ; and were the pronunciation at all approximated to, it would infallibly be discovered. For it cannot for one moment be supposed that the Hebrews, so attached to music, and accustomed to sing their hymns accompanied by musical instruments, had no exact metrical system to which they conformed their verses.

Pareau has said, that notwithstanding there is no regular metre ascertainable in Hebrew poetry, yet that, “ by those who are somewhat more than ordinarily versant in reading the Hebrew poets, it is easily perceived that there is something in them by which the ears are pleasantly affected.” Vol. ii. p. 58. Now, we aver, that this is equally striking in the unpointed language, if read according to a regular plan.^a So

^a The method generally adopted for this purpose, is to as-

that, in our opinion, so far as regards the poetry, the Masoretic system has no advantage.

In regard to conversation, which can be had only with the living Jews, the case is different. They all follow the Masoretic system, and therefore their pronounciation in this case must be adopted. In reading the language to others, *either* pronounciation will answer the purpose, according as the person to whom you read has been accustomed to the one mode or the other. Again, in reading by oneself, in order to learn the language, the advantage is *exceedingly* great in the unpointed way over the other, as the pronounciation without the points, necessarily suggests to the mind, the *exact letters* of which the word is composed, which pronounciation by points seldom does, at least to a person not greatly practised in the language. This correspondence of the pronounciation with the letters, is what tends to aid the memory so much in acquiring the language without the points, as the whole of the derivatives from the root are formed in the most simple manner, and according to fixed rules, by the addition of one or two letters, or by the change or

sume the five letters, א, אָ, י, י', ע, as equivalent to *long a, e, u, i, o*,--אָ at the beginning of a word being aspirated, or having an *h* before it, י also representing *v*, and י' *j*. Between the consonants having none of these vowels, a *short e* is inserted when required.

subtraction of a letter. Hence the whole of them are very easily retained in the mind by glancing them over a few times.

From these observations then, it appears that the only advantage derived from the Masoretic points *in pronunciation* is, when intercourse is had with living Jews.

But again, the same word has different significations according to the points affixed, and likewise two conjugations of the verb, *Pihel* and *Puhal*, are added to the five common ones. In these cases, the points have the advantage of fixing the text in many cases to one particular meaning; and were the Masorites infallible, or could we place implicit reliance on their interpretation, this would be an inestimable advantage, and not to be foregone on any account. But as no candid person will argue that the Masorites stand on such high ground, but are equally fallible with the other ancient interpreters, their points, in numberless instances, by tying down the text to a particular meaning, will only tend to mislead and prevent any advancement in attaining a true meaning of the word of God,^a by enslaving the minds of those who read only with the points to their interpretation.

^a See an example of this in a very important case, given in the Appendix to this vol. p. 309, 310. See also Lowth's Prelim. Dissertation to his translation of Isaiah.

Lastly, the Masoretic accents frequently point out connexions, which they have believed to exist between some words in sentences, and in particular, they serve to mark the endings of clauses, and to determine the parallelism, as it is called, of the sentiments. This, of course, has the same advantages, and is liable to the same objections, as the determination of the significations of words by the points affixed, of which we have just spoken.

But it is worthy of our particular observation, that, while the great argument relied upon, by the *exclusive* adherents of the Masoretic system is, that these Rabbis have handed down to us, by tradition, a correct knowledge of the significations attached to the sacred text by their forefathers, while the Hebrew was still a living language, (an opinion resting, as we have already hinted, on very slender foundations ;) yet all the critics of any name among these disciples of the Masorites pay little regard to the accents which mark the division of clauses, and the parallelism of the sentiments, but change and alter them without scruple, although it must be evident that these were much more likely to be handed down and preserved by tradition, than the much more complex punctuation of the words. The same observation applies in an equal degree to the explanations of words given by the Masoretic

Rabbis. Undoubtedly the true and primary significations of the radical words might have been expected to have been handed down by tradition to them with much more correctness than the particular significations of words in all the parts of the sacred text, as given by them in their system of points, on which such implicit reliance is placed by their Christian followers: yet, strange to tell, their testimony and judgment, in this most important point, have very little weight with even punctualist lexicographers, as will be seen by consulting their Lexicons, particularly the later ones.

The object, however, let it be remembered, which the translator has in view in these observations, is neither to depreciate the Masoretic system of points and accents, nor to recommend laying aside the study of them, but to assign to it its proper place, as a modern Rabbinical or Jewish interpretation or version of the Old Testament scriptures. Convinced too as he is, that not one page of the New Testament can be fully understood, without an intimate acquaintance with the Hebrew scriptures, and knowing from much experience, how many have abandoned the study of them, from the *difficulty attendant on the acquisition of the knowledge of the Hebrew language, on the Masoretic system, when commenced with in the first instance, although easy*

to be superadded ; he feels most anxious to place this subject in what he believes to be the proper point of view, which he has not seen done by either the punctualists, or antipunctualists, as they have been called. Both of these parties seem to have gone wrong, from an earnestness to recommend their own system, by arguing for its *exclusive* adoption. But the great thing to be desired by all the true friends of the study of the Scriptures is, that a knowledge of the Hebrew text and language should be so encouraged and facilitated, as to become general, nay, universal among all pretending to be Theologians. Neither needs the greatest stickler for the Masoretic system to be afraid, that, although not learned in the first instance, it will be neglected or despised afterwards by any one, who is really desirous of availing himself of all the aids he can get at in attaining biblical knowledge, any more than the other ancient versions : and surely no one in the present day, is so prejudiced as to hold, that it would not be better to have a knowledge of Hebrew, even without the points and accents, than none at all : which, notwithstanding the increased attention that, of late years, has been given to it, may still, it is to be feared, continue to be the case with too many even of the clerical order, unless the study be rendered, in the first instance, as easy and pleasing a task as possible, consist-

ently with a sound knowledge of this, we scruple not to call it, most admirable language.

Among the many aids to the acquisition of the full knowledge of the Hebrew language, and to the understanding of the Old Testament scriptures, which have been added in the present age, we would particularly call the attention of students to the republication of Buxtorf's Concordance, in the most beautiful form, by Tauchnitz of Leipsic. Fürst, the very learned editor has, in this most useful and much wanted publication, not only carefully corrected and greatly enlarged Buxtorf's work, but has also made his edition a complete lexicon of the Hebrew and Chaldee words of the Old Testament, besides giving an alphabetical list of all the Aramaic and Rabbinical words, explained in the course of the work, which will almost serve the purpose of a dictionary of these dialects. The work too, considering the admirable manner in which it is executed, is sold at a moderate price.

In a notice of the former volume of this work, given in the Church Review for October 1837, the critic has "amused himself" very justly, at the expense of the Translator, for an oversight he has fallen into in a note to page 16th, which should be deleted. *Vid. Errata.* The truth is, that he could never bring himself to attend to the jargon of *Kant*, nor to his most absurd theories,

as they appeared to him, and therefore had, as the critic rightly observes, forgotten the meaning of the term *moral* sense, by which Kant denominated his allegorical mode of interpreting the Scriptures, as explained by Pareau in Vol. I. p. 200.

But he cannot equally agree with the critic in the fault he finds with the *rule of translation* adopted with regard to this work, which the reader will find at page xii. of the preface to the first Volume. On the rule there laid down, the critic observes, “ Now we have always thought that the proper rule of translation was, *to give the sense of the book in the words which the Author himself was likely to have employed, had he used the language into which the version is made.* This would remove all appearance of stiffness and embarrassment; and we do not know that the benefits which Dr. Forbes anticipates from a *contrary practice*, and which, in our opinion, are rather imaginary than real, would counterbalance ‘ the awkwardness of the sentences,’ or the advantage of making ‘ the style quite easy and flowing.’ ” The Translator must acknowledge himself quite unable to conceive how he could have hoped to have approximated, in any other way, to the canon of translation laid down by the critic, “ to give the sense of the book in the words which the author himself was likely to

have employed, had he used the language into which the version is made," than by endeavouring "not only to give the sense of the author, without either addition or diminution, but, as far as the idiom of the two languages would permit, the dress or form in which the author has thought proper to put it:" which was the rule which the Translator laid down to himself, and which the critic condemns.

But this criticism would have been allowed to pass without animadversion, and have been cheerfully left to the judgment of the attentive reader, were it not that it has a tendency to confirm what we consider as an error of the greatest importance. The error alluded to is, that of taking liberties with the language of the author one is translating, so as to consider it not at all necessary to adhere to his particular style and manner of representing his sentiments, while it is thought quite sufficient to represent the sense as it appears to the Translator, dressed up in his own style, little omissions and additions being made without scruple. We do not mean to say that this mode of translation is recommended by the critic above quoted, for it is not a little curious that he has stated in another manner just the very rule of translation which the translator of this book had declared he aimed at following, while he condemns the necessary result of adhering to that

rule, namely, "occasional awkwardness of sentences," and a "style not quite easy and flowing." For a close adherence to an original by a translator must necessarily have the air of a translation, that is, it cannot be so easy and natural as an original composition; and this in particular must be the case, if the idioms of the two languages differ very much. But, to say no more on this point—one thing we have learned from experience, and we have not a little in this matter, that we have never, in translating, found ourselves attempting to give the meaning of an author from a general understanding of what he intended without tying ourselves down to keep closely to his very form of expression so far as the idiom of the language into which we were translating would permit, that we did not, on examination, find that we had either added to, or taken away something from the meaning of the author, or what is worse, that we had in some degree misrepresented it. Now, whatever may be said, if any one of these three things occurs, it is not translating; nor is the duty of a translator fulfilled. For the person who takes the trouble of translating a book, says in fact to the public that he considers it a valuable performance, and certainly acknowledges in some degree the superior knowledge of the author to his own on the subject. His duty, therefore, un-

doubtedly is, to give, so far as he can, the exact meaning of his author, otherwise he does not act fairly by the author, or the public. It, indeed, appears to us, that the reason why we have so few good translations of the ancient authors into the English language is, the allowance that translators among us have generally thought themselves authorised to take in departing from the strict and literal meaning of their originals, by which the translation is rendered vague, paraphrastical, and incorrect. It may, indeed, be thought that the English language, from its structure and idiom being so widely different, is not fit for making a close and literal translation from the ancient languages. But this is not so, for the powers of this language are quite equal to strict and literal translation, at least of prose authors, without departing from its idiom or structure. It, indeed, requires great knowledge and command of the language to accomplish this task—and, therefore, perhaps, a more improving exercise for the acquisition, both of the language from which one translates, and of the vernacular tongue, cannot be resorted to, than such accurate translation, as allows of adding nothing to, and taking nothing from the original, in an idiomatical vernacular version.

But the great object we have in view, in making these remarks on translation, is to guard

the student against satisfying himself in any attempt at the interpretation of a passage *before he has translated it accurately into his own language*. A correct translation is, indeed, the best help to interpretation ; and many verbose commentaries might be saved, were every attempt at interpretation accompanied with a translation giving the interpreter's exact understanding of the whole of the author he is commenting upon. Thus would a great deal of time be saved in consulting commentaries, and the heavy complaint we so often hear against commentators passing over real difficulties, while they load their books with notes lengthened *ad nauseam*, explaining with much parade of learning what needs no explanation, would be obviated. The great groundwork of the interpreter's office, we repeat, is accurate grammatical translation of the author into the vernacular tongue. This cannot be performed but by one much versant in both languages, and much exercised in translation. But if the student allows himself, *on any occasion*, to depart from the strict rule we have mentioned, he will soon, from indolence, inattention, prejudice, or from many other causes, be led into assigning vague, incorrect, and most perverted meanings to the expressions of his author. If, on the other hand, he pertinaciously adheres to this rule, he will in time become so habituated to that complete ac-

curacy so indispensable in an interpreter, as to be saved from innumerable errors. If these observations be correct when applied to the student of ancient literature, for the promoting of his advancement in a true knowledge of that literature, and of language in general—how much more strongly do they apply to the student of the sacred records, on the right interpretation of which so much depends?

We cannot, on the present occasion, enter farther into this very important subject: but we trust, that what we have said may call the attention of students of ancient literature, but particularly of biblical students, to the exercise of accurate grammatical translation, as one of the most efficient means of qualifying them for the correct interpretation of ancient authors and of the sacred records.

FRINOTON
THEOLOGICAL
PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

PART SECOND.

SECTION FOURTH.

OF THE EXERCISE OF CRITICISM BY AN INTERPRETER
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

§ 1.

A PRUDENT exercise of Criticism is not only permitted, but even necessary in interpreting the books of the Old Testament.

Obs. 1. By *Criticism*, of the exercise of which we are here speaking, we mean only that sort which is employed in taking away and correcting either the greater or lesser errors in readings. There is indeed a more lofty or sublime criticism, with which splen-

did appellation is dignified by modern writers that criticism which inquires into the manner in which some of the books have been arranged in the order in which we have them, into the completeness of the parts of which they consist, and into the sources from which the historical parts have been derived. We do not indeed, in these times, in which much more curious inquiries are made into the nature of many things than formerly, disapprove of an investigation being made into even the interior nature of the sacred books. But we highly disapprove of those, who audaciously describe this to be in many of its parts such, as seems greatly to weaken the authority of the sacred volume. Having already condemned this rashness, (vol. i. p. 102, 103.) we shall here only, in one word, remark that it is quite right in an interpreter not to consider those things unworthy of his attention which belong to the higher departments of criticism, provided this be done modestly, sober-mindedly, consistently with the veneration due to the sacred writings, and with the intention of defending with all their might their dignity. But the nature of our work neither allows nor requires that we should take a survey of each of the books of the Old Testament with reference to that sublimer species of criticism: although, when an opportunity offers, we are desirous of noticing some points usually referred to this head, as we have already done and shall afterwards do. And even in the sketch on the exercise of criticism on which we are entering, some things that must not be passed over will occur, which perhaps may be referred to this sublimer sort of criticism.

Obs. 2. It is scarcely necessary to endeavour to prove to the people of the present age, what we have advanced in the Introduction, §. 1. obs. 3. and in P. i. S. i. c. iii. and iv.—that criticism must be employed by an interpreter of the Old Testament. For in our times no one will be esteemed to have discharged fully all the duties of a good interpreter with regard to any of the writings of antiquity, who shall have neglected criticism: and often also in regard to these we must make a choice among the various readings which exist, or, through means of conjecture alone, we must amend corrupted passages. Therefore it is a right opinion, that criticism should not be disjoined from the proper interpretation of the Old Testament, but should occupy a conspicuous place in it. Nay, it is even necessary that both should be connected in a stricter manner than in ordinary cases, from the greater antiquity of these books and their more frequent transcription. For at the present day, among by far the greater part of Christian interpreters, that opinion has long lost all its force, which, rashly taken up by the Jewish masters, had greatly prevailed; that the text of the Old Testament had been formed with so great care and diligence by the Masorites, and was so perfect, that it required no critical emendation, which by all was accounted unallowable and injurious to the honour of the sacred writings: and the much more liberal sentiment, and more consonant with the nature of things, has begun to prevail among Christians, that criticism is allowable and necessary in these books, and, provided it

be properly exercised, detracts nothing from their dignity, but in reality promotes it.

Obs. 3. However much then criticism is commendable in an interpreter of the Old Testament, it is necessary that it be exercised with prudence.

As with regard to all other ancient writers, that insane licence is justly exploded, which instantly changes at its pleasure whatever may be displeasing, so it deserves to be in the highest degree reprobated when attempted in those books which we venerate as sacred. It must indeed be confessed, that the more ancient these books all of them are, we rightly judge that there are in them more things requiring emendation: but yet, whatever emendations may be made in them, whether through the means of sufficient authorities, or through conjectural criticism, these ought not to be made, unless proper reasons can be produced, which, if they do not at once satisfy all the best judges, ought at least to be of such a nature as not to bring upon their authors the merited reprehension of rashness.

A certain degree of erudition is necessary to the right and proper exercise of criticism. But if this be required in a great degree in him who wishes to exercise criticism successfully on the Greek or Latin writings, it certainly ought not to be small when the subject is the much more ancient Hebrew writings. Whoever, then, is almost a stranger to the history of the Hebrew text, to the sources of its criticism, to the knowledge and study of these, and to an acquaintance with the language and the things treated in these books, must not presume to think that he is

able rightly to discharge the office of a good critic. Yet, however, from the time when criticism began to be exercised on the Old Testament, there have been not a few who have committed the grossest errors, from not being sufficiently furnished with the aids of learning, without which a critic is almost intolerable.

Finally, although criticism is fallacious, uncertain, and generally rash, unless accompanied by sound and judicious erudition; yet erudition alone, however ample and copious, must not be reckoned capable of making a good critic. For, as there have been most erudite students of the learned languages who, with the splendour of a great name, attained slender reputation as critics, so also there have been very learned interpreters of the Old Testament who were very moderate critics. Therefore, as all who labour in the interpretation of the Old Testament are not eminent for those endowments of the mind whose efficacy is greatest in forming a critic, it is certainly to be wished, that those who possess in an inferior degree these endowments, should, in exercising criticism, know to keep within bounds more than others, and in the more difficult places confess their ignorance, leaving these to others whose shoulders are better able to bear this mighty burden. But the more any one is made and formed by nature for the successful exercise of criticism, the more ought he to take care that he both govern and direct his genius which readily glides into luxuriancy by the caution of judgment, and cultivate both those noble and most excellent gifts, and adorn and enrich them by the riches of learning, without which he must fall into

licentiousness, and will by no means escape the accusation of ignorance and unskilfulness.

§ 2.

Besides the absurd Masoretical division of the sentences often observable, and the equally improper more recent distribution into chapters and verses, errors not a few, of various kinds, and arising from various causes, have in process of time been introduced into the text of the Old Testament.

Obs. 1. Among the Masoretic inventions pointed out in P. i. S. i. c. i. § 2. obs. 8, we have reckoned the accents, which, while they serve for marking the strength of the voice, have also the effect of dividing each of the sentences into larger and smaller members. But although this distinction is in some degree conformable to the original distinction, and therefore for the most part rightly made, it is, however, far from being the case that we should justly consider it to be so on all occasions. Nor is it indeed in itself probable that the true division of sentences in all passages should have been handed down and preserved inviolate through unerring tradition even to the time of the Masorites. Therefore an interpreter ought to have no regard to this Masoretic division, when any other seems to be more proper. And indeed their division not unfrequently obstructs the sense, and ought without doubt to be rejected. A

very clear example occurs in Ps. xlii. 6, which partly also has a reference to an improper division of the words. There we find written פְּנִי with the accent added which marks the finishing of the whole period, whereas the word which is the beginning of the next sentence ought rather to have been marked as the final word, and both should have been written פְּנִי וְאֵלֹהֵי in the same way as in verse 12, and in Ps. xliii. 5, which Psalm is improperly divided from the former.

Obs. 2. As the distribution of chapters and verses, such as at present exists in the books of the Old Testament, is of very recent date, as we have seen, P. i. S. i. c. iii. § 5. obs. 4, the interpreter ought to pay no regard to it where it appears to have been improperly made. In the former observation, an example of an absurd division of the verses was adduced, originating from an absurd Masoretical division of periods; and it is unnecessary to bring forward more instances in so indubitable and clear a case. With regard to the division into chapters, although it be often made in a manner not seemingly improper, it is often quite otherwise. Thus the first chapter of Genesis is improperly concluded at the 31st verse, for the three verses in the beginning of the 2nd chapter have a manifest connexion with the first chapter. Similar instances will be occasionally discovered by an attentive interpreter: nay, even an example occurred in the former observation of an ancient absurd division of poems in the improper separation of Psalms xlii. and xliii.

Obs. 3. Having premised these brief and necessary remarks regarding the division and distribution of

the sentences, verses, and chapters, as not always deserving of adoption by the interpreter, we shall speak more fully of the faults of the Hebrew text itself, and of their nature and principal causes: and, in doing this, we shall proceed from the more trifling to the more important; and shall then treat of the manner in which one should endeavour to correct them.

Obs. 4. We shall begin with the vowel points, and with those other points which were invented by the Masorites for fixing the pronunciation of certain letters. As these are of recent origin, although adapted to the ancient manner of pronouncing, and as the marks of the vowels, whilst the language was a living language, were fewer and not attached to all the words, as we have already said, P. i. S. i. c. i. § 2. obs. 5, and 7, what intelligent person of the present day can bring himself to believe that the points have been always correctly applied by the Masorites? Or, is it in any degree probable, that each of the words anciently distinguished by no vowel marks, had afterwards assigned by them those points which were quite correct, and exhibited no other sense than what the original authors intended? There was indeed less danger of error in conforming the vowels, where some sort of vowel marks had been formerly adjoined, to the new system of punctuation: but even in this case we cannot be persuaded that these adjoined vowel points had even, from the most ancient times down to the age of the Masorites, suffered no change, so that none of them had been taken away, none of them wrongly added, and none of them by mistake interchanged with each other. And even after the

Masoretic revision and fixing of the reading of the Hebrew text, is it possible, that in the very frequent transcription of the books of the Old Testament, and in the very great facility of falling into mistake from the minuteness of the forms of the points, all errors should have been avoided? We do not, therefore, without good grounds, come to the conclusion, that in the vowel and other points there are multiplied mistakes requiring correction through the aid of criticism.

Obs. 5. Even in the letters themselves errors were inevitable. Their form indeed seems to have been but little changed during the progress of time; and it is probable that they retain to this day the same figure which they anciently possessed, differing only in being written somewhat more elegantly, as we have already seen, P. i. S. i. c. i. § 1. obs. 3. More causes however than one exist, through which errors in writing the letters would be committed.

1. In slightly adverting to the chief points relating to this subject, we observe, in the first place, that there are many letters exceedingly similar in form to each other, which consequently, in writing, might easily be interchanged. Such are particularly ב and כ—ד and ה—ו, ז and ח—ט and י—כ and ל—מ and נ—ע and פ—צ.

2. It must have frequently happened too, that some letters would be either faintly written, or have been almost deleted or blotted; in copying which errors could scarcely be guarded against.

3. Besides, in copying one manuscript from another, the transcriber could not be supposed to have his eye continually on each letter of the manuscript

he was copying from, but, as is usual in such cases, to have read whole, nay generally several consecutive words in the first place, and then written them from memory. Therefore, as the most accurate man of the present day cannot preserve himself from every error, and not only frequently either transposes, omits, or adds letters, or substitutes some in the room of others, so, much less could such accidents have been prevented, except by perpetual miracles, in the frequently repeated transcription of the very ancient Hebrew writings.

4. In the last place, as those who wrote Hebrew manuscripts frequently had one who read and dictated to them, this person could not escape falling into occasional errors, by which the writer was misled; and even when he who dictated read rightly, it cannot be imagined that the other would always hear correctly. Occasionally too, if he who dictated did not pronounce quite distinctly, it might easily happen, that the transcribers would not write the letters which were in the text. Nay more, as some of the Hebrew letters are very similar in sound, and some of them are sometimes quiescent or redundant, it may readily be conceived that from this cause also not a few mistakes would occur.

Obs. 6. Even in whole words errors could scarcely be avoided.

1. As it frequently happens to us in copying any writing to omit a whole word, we can scarcely doubt that the same thing occasionally happened to the Hebrew manuscript copiers. If the error remained unnoticed, there was of course a hiatus. If after-

wards it was discovered, and the omitted word placed in the margin, it was not always in the next transcription inserted into the text where it ought to have been. We cannot therefore doubt that some words are now altogether wanting in the text, and some put in the wrong place.

2. The transposition of words, at several of which together one had looked and afterwards wrote, was so easy an error, that we are fully satisfied that it was by no means rare. And an error of this kind was the more frequently not observed afterwards, as certain words, without any violation of grammar, may often be placed in a different order from what they were put in by the author.

3. As certain passages in the Old Testament, some of which are long and some shorter, are repeated, and many which contain parallel sentiments, a comparison of these was made, and that sometimes from memory only, and in consequence some words were changed by mistake, or even substituted as better.

4. Some changes took place in the text from the scholia or glosses placed on the margin, in which certain words were interpreted, by the word which was explanatory being either taken from the margin and added to the text, or substituted in the room of that which the writer had used.

5. As all the words anciently seem not to have been written conjoined, but divided by a small intervening space, which however was occasionally neglected, as we have remarked, P. i. S. i. c. iii. § 2. obs. 8; hence it arises that occasionally some were

afterwards joined which had been disjoined, and others disjoined which had been joined.

6. If, as is very probable, the numbers either always, or sometimes at least, were among the Hebrews in ancient times denoted by the letters of the alphabet, hence, as a mistake in letters is very easy, these marks of the numbers were not always expressed in the words by which they ought to have been.

7. Nor is it altogether improbable that certain words were occasionally contracted, which were afterwards not written at full length, or were written wrong. This contracting of words is common among the modern Jews in very many words; but it does not appear that it was equally common in very ancient times. After the Babylonish captivity, when the sacred books came to be more frequently copied, such contractions in writing were employed occasionally, but not very frequently, not even in יהוה the name of God: and in the manuscripts of the Old Testament they rarely occur.

8. Lastly, omitting other less noticeable causes of errors, we remark, that from the time the Jews adopted the opinion that it was unlawful for the people to pronounce the quadrilateral name יהוה, and employed instead of it אדני, or if they added אלהים, each of these might have been easily interchanged in writing.

Obs. 7. It is likewise not without reason believed that whole passages in the Old Testament writings were, through mistake, altogether omitted and lost, or were added, or were inserted in a wrong place.

1. As we sometimes, through the wandering of

our eyes when reading or writing, omit words, in a similar way it also easily happens, that we unwittingly pass over whole members or even sentences, especially if what immediately follows, begins or ends in a like manner. It is therefore not rash to suppose that the same thing has sometimes happened in the books of the Old Testament, so frequently transcribed and retranscribed, in which, from this cause, a hiatus of greater or less extent occasionally exists.

2. From the same cause it might have easily taken place that passages which had been left out should have been written on the margin either by him who had omitted them, or by some other person who observed the error, and afterwards not put in the text in their proper place by those who copied from the manuscript.

3. As in ancient times some words, intended for the interpretation of others in the text, seem to have been added in the margin, and afterwards heedlessly taken into the text; so it is extremely probable that some sentences or notes written on the margin for the sake of explication or illustration, were afterwards improperly brought into the text, to which they were thought to belong.

4. Nor, lastly, is it improbable to suppose that, in very ancient times, portions of the sacred volume were written on sheets of a greater or lesser size, and afterwards, whatever were the materials of which they were made, either sewed or glued together. Consequently it might easily happen that in process of time some of these might become separated, and afterwards be absurdly taken for unconnected writings,

so that finally some of them might be conjoined in an order different from that intended by the author.

Obs. 8. Among the causes of error which we have briefly noticed, we have made no mention either of the inattention or inferior skill^a of the authors themselves, or the gross ignorance of the transcribers. For, if in the profane writers of antiquity it is right to attribute mistakes in language to transcribers rather than to the authors themselves: assuredly it would be unjust to seek in any degree for the cause of mistakes occurring in the sacred writings in their authors, men so eminent, and the servants of divine providence, in conveying, increasing, and preserving the light of religion. Among them, indeed, there were some whose style was more polished, elegant, and altogether more perfect: but justice even will oblige us to acquit each of them of shameful ignorance of their own language, and to transfer every real error in language to the account of the lapse of ages, the frequency of transcription, and the negligence of transcribers.— And when we speak of their *negligence*, and not gross ignorance, we mean that the errors in writing committed by them ought not to be ascribed in every case, to any other cause than to the tendency which men have to fall into errors in transcriptions. We know indeed that numerous errors in transcribing the ancient Greek and Latin books, and even the books of the New Testament itself must be attributed to the great ignorance of the transcribers: but the case is not the same with regard to the books con-

^a “*Minoris peritiæ*,” in the original.

tained in the Old Testament. For although, after the return from the captivity, and subsequently, when the sacred books were more frequently copied, less care was used in the few Chaldaic portions than in the other parts which were composed in the language accounted most sacred; nay, although greater caution was employed in those writings which were of superior estimation in religion and public divine worship: it cannot however be denied that the Jews on the whole manifested the greatest care in the transcription of their sacred books. That by far the greatest part of these copies were made by the Jews for their own use, is evident from the nature of the case, and is proved from history and from the inspection of the manuscripts. The more indeed that the Hebrew approached to becoming a dead language, the less were the Jews skilled in it, and consequently more errors originated from this cause, in the transcription of manuscripts, than we can suppose took place while the language flourished among them. Yet, however, the exceeding and almost superstitious care of their sacred books which the Jews bestowed on them, and continue even in these latter times, forbids that we put at all on the same footing the transcription of the Hebrew books made by them, with the transcription of other books made by Christians, oftentimes most ignorant and altogether careless. But even those Christians who occasionally copied the Hebrew books, did, by the confession of the Jews themselves, employ the same care and attention as they themselves did in this most important matter.

§ 3.

The errors, which we have just referred to, may, for the most part, by the due application of the aids which criticism supplies, be corrected.

Obs. 1. The aids to be employed in the criticism of the Old Testament which are of value, we have already mentioned in P. i. S. i. c. iii. § 6. obs. 1—7. We shall now speak briefly of their use, treating of them more or less copiously in proportion to their respective importance, and afterwards say something on conjectural emendation, which we have mentioned in the same place, *Obs. 8.*

Obs. 2. We begin with the more ancient editions and manuscripts. The various readings, taken from both these in later times by KENNICOTT, regard only the diversity of the letters and words; and DE ROSSI, who enlarged and extended the labours of Kennicott, noted only the diversity of the vowel points in those passages where it seemed most worthy of being remarked: consequently, what we have to say regarding the critical value and use of various readings, refers chiefly to the letters and words.

1. As then all the manuscripts which have been collated are posterior to the Masoretic revisal, as we have seen in the place quoted above, § 5. obs. 3, only few various readings more ancient than those contained in that edition can be gathered from them. There are indeed some few manuscripts, whose writers preferred some readings, which they found in more ancient codices still extant in their time, to

the Masoretic—to such readings, therefore, great value is to be attached.

2. Although all the editions have been made conformable to the Masoretic text, and all the more recent ones, with the exception of a few typographical errors, very closely agree, yet in the more ancient of them there are real various readings: the reason of which is explained in the place before quoted, § 5. obs. 5. Hence the more ancient editions are deservedly reckoned of equal value with the manuscripts.

3. Very many of the various readings noted by Kennicott and his assistants and associates, are indeed of little value. Some are manifest errors of the transcribers; others have respect to the quiescent or useless letters, which are sometimes added and sometimes omitted. No one, however, ought to suppose, that by the work of De Rossi, in which a selection is made, and more manuscripts collated, the edition of Kennicott is rendered useless to a cautious and accurate critic. For besides, that in this edition, some readings are to be found not noted by De Rossi, which are by no means unworthy of the attention of a critic, it is far from being useless generally, that all the readings which have been discovered and recorded should be known. For from variations which may seem trifling, something may often be derived adapted either for establishing the received reading, or rendering a proposed change more probable. Nay, even the manifest errors of the transcribers clearly place before the eyes, both the facility, manner, and

numerous causes of the errors made in transcription.

4. Respecting the value of the readings extracted from manuscripts, a judgment must be formed partly from the number of the manuscripts agreeing. In this case the law, that the more evidences there are for any reading, the more is its authority established, exerts its force. Yet we must not always determine the excellence of any reading in the Old Testament, solely from the number of testimonies. For all its manuscripts yet collated are posterior to the Masoretic revisal of the text, and there are some which may have readings which should be preferred to the Masoretic. Therefore, it may happen that a reading of by far the greater number of manuscripts may be erroneous and false, and the reading of a few, nay, of one manuscript, may be much preferable, and superior.

5. In judging of the value of various readings, we ought always to take somewhat into account the general excellence of the manuscripts in which they are found. A manuscript possesses some certain degree of excellence from its antiquity, but by no means such as is properly attributed to the more ancient manuscripts in the case of the New Testament. For to these, the nearer they are to the age of the authors, the more value is assigned by skilful critics. But even the most ancient manuscripts of the Old Testament, which now survive and have been collated, are very recent when we regard the age of the authors. As, however, in the more ancient Hebrew manuscripts, some readings which are rejected improperly by the Masorites, may occur, it is evident that some atten-

tion ought to be paid to the more ancient manuscripts in the criticism of the Old Testament. But, as a manuscript is not always the more accurate in proportion to its antiquity, it follows, that we ought to attend to the accuracy with which manuscripts, of whatever age, are written. Nay, it may even be that a recent manuscript accurately written, has been transcribed from a very ancient, and at the same time accurately written manuscript, which has been long since lost. It is, however, in all cases an indubitable mark of innate excellence in any manuscript, that it is not only accurately written, but also contains many good readings differing from the received text, and at the same time clearly confirmed by the authority of those more ancient testimonies of which we shall speak very soon. Should any one wish to inquire, when he deems it necessary, into the nature and value of the various codices, either written or printed, which have been collated; he may consult the catalogue of the codices marked by numbers, which Kennicott and De Rossi have made.

6. The authority of various readings found in one or more manuscripts receives in all cases much strength if confirmed by the additional authority of testimonies much more ancient than all manuscripts, such as the ancient versions, and, in the books of Moses, the Samaritan Pentateuch. But it may still happen that a reading which may be good, is found in one or more manuscripts, though it can be confirmed by the authority of none of these ancient testimonies. For why should not some good readings, which none of these ancient evidences had seen,

have been taken from some one very ancient manuscript, and preserved and brought down even to our times?

7. Finally, the goodness or badness of various readings must be principally judged of, from their own nature. In very many of these the error in transcription is evident at first sight. In some, every one of tolerable perspicacity will readily perceive the ground on which they are to be amended and not admitted. This especially takes place, when either a plainer word is substituted in the place of a more obscure, or an easier and more familiar phrase for a more difficult and less used one: in which case the critical rule is generally to be followed, of preferring the more difficult reading to the easier, as this last seems to show the hand of a corrector.—But in all cases strict attention must be paid to the context; and those accounted the preferable readings, which, although less recommended by authority, are yet more suitable to the passage which is employing the attention of the interpreter. It is not necessary to enter into any argument to evince that this general law should always, and in every case, be observed with regard to writings of the most remote antiquity; which, in order to be rightly observed, requires, indeed, that one should be deeply skilled, both in the Hebrew language, and in the knowledge of the subject in which he is employed; for this, conjoined with a sound judgment and happy genius, will be of much more avail in enabling a man to distinguish a true from a false reading, than the best and most ample precepts of critics.

Obs. 3. Regarding the use of the Masora in criticism, few remarks will be required.

1. It is far from being true, that all the Masoretic annotations refer to real varieties of readings. By much the greater part of them are taken up in noting some peculiarity in the writing of the vowels, accents, letters, and whole words, in the computation of the letters, words, and verses occurring in the several books, and in remarking many other things indicative of the minute and superstitious disposition of the Jews.

2. It is proper to reckon in the number of their critical annotations the extraordinary points which the Masorites have added to certain words and letters ; and which, according to the most probable opinion, indicate that they seemed to suspect them. But it has been observed that the most of these annotations may be neglected without any detriment to the sense, and that some of them are even omitted in some codices, or in some versions, or in both.

3. Of the same nature are what are called תקון *תקון* *the correction of the writers*, and עטור סופרים *the taking away of the writers* : the former of which regards some places in which certain errors are corrected which were reckoned manifest ; regarding which corrections, as they are right in themselves, and conformed to the testimony of the best manuscripts, and in consequence received, most of them too being confirmed by the authority of the ancient interpreters, there is no difficulty in forming a judgment. *The taking away of the writers* again has a reference to a very few places in which, in con-

formity to the reading of the better manuscripts, as it seems, they were of opinion that the copulative ו ought to be taken away: but in which, however, as far as concerns the sense, it is quite the same thing whether it be taken away or not.

4. But not to speak of things of less moment, what deserves our principal attention, on this head, are the annotations placed by the Masorites on the margin of the manuscripts, and called קרי וכתוב, or *what is read* and *what is written*. Of these, some are grammatical and orthographical, in which principally more unusual modes of writing are made conformable to the more usual mode; but, as we think, these corrections for the most part ought not to be received, inasmuch as we ought to seek for the reasons of them in our ignorance of a more ancient state of grammar, which afterwards became almost obsolete. Others of these have substituted a word more decent in the room of one which the Masorites considered to be less so; but these also ought to be rejected, although they have sometimes crept into not a few manuscripts from the margin. Others, however, do belong to various readings collected and preserved by the Masorites: as to these, they deserve the same attention as any other various readings; except that most of those noted in the margin have the recommendation of greater antiquity, as being collected and noted from more ancient manuscripts. Besides these, they have קרי רלא כתיב and קרי כתיב רלא: the latter of which phrases signifies, that although written, yet the word may, in reading, without injuring the sense, be omitted, while the

former implies, that to render the meaning clearer it may in reading be added, although not written in the text. These may therefore be reckoned among exegetical glosses rather than among various readings having any critical value.

Obs. 4. We now go on to the use of the Samaritan Pentateuch in the criticism of the Hebrew text of the books of Moses. Little will require to be added on this point, as we have already said enough for our purpose regarding the antiquity and nature of this copy of the Pentateuch in P. i. S. i. c. iii. § 6. *obs. 3.* We remark then, in general, that it is far from being the case, that every diversity of reading which exists between the Samaritan and Hebrew text of the five books of Moses, is to be reckoned in the number of true various readings. For were the Samaritan text in a state of much greater correctness than it is at present, its critical use would then be much greater, but still requiring much caution in its application. There have, indeed, been persons who, from its manifest errors, and from too great a veneration for the Masoretic text, have held it to be a most impure source deserving of no credit: while others again have extolled it extravagantly, and pronounced that wherever it recedes from the Hebrew text, its reading ought to be preferred to the Masoretic. But, indeed, as usually happens when two opposite views are maintained, so in this case, truth lies between. The Samaritan codex of the Pentateuch is, indeed, by far the most ancient; and although in the lapse of ages, partly through the negligence of men, and partly through the desire of correcting, it has suffered no little change

and deterioration, still, however, it possesses the highest authority, and will be of no small use in the hands of him who, led solely by the love of investigating the truth, shall employ it with true critical prudence. But it is almost impossible to lay down any general and certain rules that will apply in each discrepancy of the two texts, which must be judged of principally from the innate goodness of each reading.

Obs. 5. Among the aids for exercising criticism on the books of the Old Testament, the ancient versions hold a particularly distinguished place—but these we have almost fully discussed in P. i. S. i. c. iv. Let us now see what are the chief rules to be observed in their critical use.

1. Above all, we must take care to consult the text itself, of the ancient versions, and not the Latin translations of even skilful interpreters. There is in the Polyglott Bibles a Latin translation added to the Greek and Oriental versions, and Montfaucon has not only edited his Hexapla in Greek, but conjoined to it a Latin version. These Latin translations are, indeed, of some use, and afford considerable assistance to those, in particular, who have not yet had sufficient experience in comparing the ancient versions. But should any one capable of consulting the text, be satisfied, in the exercise of criticism, with the translations only, and neglect the fountains for the rills derived from them, he would act unwisely, as these Latin translations are rarely faithful, particularly those which are added to the Oriental versions.

2. In exercising criticism on the Old Testament,

those versions are of principal value, which are known to have been made from the text of the Old Testament itself. For some of them have been translated from the Hebrew text, others from some of its versions, and particularly from the Alexandrine Greek: the Samaritan, and Samaritan-Arabic versions are from the Samaritan Pentateuch. Both these last, therefore, are very useful in the criticism of the Samaritan Pentateuch itself, but are only more remotely applicable to that of the Jewish Pentateuch. And the same observation holds regarding those versions which have been made, not from the Hebrew, but from some of its versions.

3. But we ought not unhesitatingly to confide in translations made from the Hebrew text itself, since there are in them very grievous errors in many passages. Therefore, since much remains to be done in these ancient translations, and those nearest in age to them, in purging and restoring them to their original purity as much as possible, in which, indeed, every well trained interpreter, when opportunity offers, should employ himself—we must be satisfied how cautiously these excellent fountains, but in various ways rendered turbid and muddy, should be applied to his purposes by the critic.

4. Even in those places where there can scarcely be any fair ground of doubt regarding the right reading of an ancient version, every difference of interpretation must not be accounted as indicating a real or certain variety of reading in the Hebrew text of that time. For the ancient translators seemed to themselves to read differently from the real reading,

from being led into error by the similitude of letters, the indistinctness of the writing, or other causes; sometimes they assigned a meaning to a word not known to us; sometimes they translated freely; sometimes they endeavoured to correct something which they considered erroneously written; and, in fine, through ignorance of Hebrew phraseology or affairs, they mistook the sense, or, through conjecture, gave that signification to the words which seemed possible to be elicited from the context with some appearance of probability.

5. Let no one understand what we have now said in such a way as to suppose that there is little use of the ancient versions of the Old Testament in its criticism. On the contrary, this use of them is in all respects so great, that we have no other aids of equal value, provided they be prudently employed. But indeed many cautions are here required; and the more cautious one is, the more will he deserve commendation, and the more will such conduct lead to good results.

In the first place, we must pay attention to the value of the versions themselves. This partly depends on their greater or less antiquity. For the more ancient the interpreters are, the more ancient are the codices they employed: and, consequently, if antiquity only be had regard to, the Alexandrine Greek version would of right hold the highest place, as having been made long before the age of Christ. We ought not, however, to determine from the antiquity of any version solely what is its value for critical purposes, but also from its nature. Thus the Alexan-

drine Greek version of the Pentateuch is not only the most ancient of all, but possesses also in itself the greatest excellence : this translation, however, in the other books is not only less ancient, but also on the whole less excellent. Next to this the fragments of the other Greek translators are to be reckoned of the highest value ; chiefly, however, those of AQUILA, who studiously adhered to the Hebrew text with a scrupulous, but most valuable exactness, for the purposes of criticism. Then come to be ranked in the number of the safest guides, the most ancient Syriac version, and the version of Jerome, both made from the Hebrew text. Lastly, not to say more in this place of the other versions, very little value is in general to be attached to the Chaldee paraphrases. The more accurate then, and the better a version is of itself, the more firm and certain is its authority. There is, however, none, not even the worst and most trifling, of all the ancient versions, of which a skilful critic may not sometimes make some use.

Any reading derived from the ancient versions has great authority, if it appears translated, not by one, but by many of these interpreters. If to this be added the concurrence of some of the Hebrew manuscripts, much greater force is thence derived to its evidence. For the greater the number of different testimonies to any various reading, the more do they mutually confirm and strengthen each other's evidence ; particularly if there be no cause of suspicion, that either the more recent version has been corrected from the more ancient, or this last from the for-

mer—or that the Hebrew manuscripts have not undergone any change derived from the ancient versions, or vice versa.

But, indeed, as in judging of the various readings collected from manuscripts, we principally attend to the goodness of the readings themselves, so likewise ought we to form our judgment of any reading, which the ancient interpreters seem to supply, principally from the goodness of the reading itself. For it may happen that a reading, in which either all or most of these agree, and which is besides found in some manuscripts, should yet be rejected and held inferior to that of the received text, if this last be more consistent with the context. For why may not the codices which the ancient interpreters employed have been corrupted in the particular passage treated of, whilst the codices which the Masorites thought proper to follow, may be esteemed to have preserved the true reading? If, again, the context favours any reading which may be derived from the ancient versions, it is, without doubt, to be preferred to the received reading, although all the collated manuscripts confirm it, as indeed the versions are much more ancient testimonies than these manuscripts. Lastly, the reading of any one ancient translator affords such ground of its goodness, that although the authority of none other of the ancient *testes* can be produced, even that one ancient interpreter affords a sufficiently probable reason, if agreeable to the context, why a sound critic should acquiesce in it.

Obs. 6. We now proceed to parallel passages,

which have been justly reckoned among the aids to criticism : and with regard to which we wish the following things to be attended to.

1. An interpreter of the Old Testament should carefully guard against accounting as errors of the transcribers, those differences which exist in parallel passages when mutually compared. When either two writers draw from one common source, or the one transcriber from the other ; or in fine, when the same author again repeats any thing which he has written, these do not always employ the same words, but while retaining the greater part, they occasionally add some, take away others, or exchange some for others. The transcribers have not sufficiently in all cases attended to these diversities, but have not unfrequently, by comparing parallel passages with each other, been desirous of correcting the one from the other.—And it is proper here to notice, that although transcribers have not unfrequently made mistakes in proper names, yet all the diversities which occur in these, as appearing from the collation of parallel passages, ought not to be imputed to the faults of transcribers, because one and the same person sometimes had two different names, and even one and the same name does not seem to have been always pronounced and written in the same way.

2. Whenever the diversities are not of that nature which can justly be attributed to the authors themselves, some greater degree of authority is due to the more ancient place of the two : but, however, as it is possible that the more correct reading has been preserved in the more recent passage, and the more an-

cient been corrupted, antiquity alone affords not a certain proof of the superiority of a reading, which will always, and in every instance, be sufficient. The nature of the circumstances must therefore be principally attended to, and that reading preferred which in itself may deservedly be esteemed the superior one.

Obs. 7. Let us now briefly see what is the use of the books of the New Testament in the criticism of the Old Testament, which, though it requires to be prudently limited, should not, however, be neglected. It is far indeed from being the case, that the passages quoted in the New Testament from the more ancient sacred volume, are to be supposed to have been translated literally from the Hebrew text. For the writers of the New Testament have sometimes from memory, and regarding the sense only, and sometimes too from the much used Greek version, adduced passages of the Old Testament to serve their particular purpose : in these passages, therefore, they conduce in some degree to the interpretation of the Old Testament, and occasionally deserve to be employed in the criticism of the Greek version ; but no immediate authority ought to be attributed to them in the criticism of the Hebrew text. No little utility, however, is to be derived from them in this respect ; nay, they are of the highest authority in determining the true reading in those places, particularly where it can scarcely be doubted that they followed the Hebrew text itself : and then, too, for the most part they afford a clear confirmation of other authorities. Of this we may adduce an example, but one of no little

moment. In the xvi. Psalm, 10th verse, חסידים is read in the plural number: but there, from the authority of the Greek, and many other ancient versions, as well as of innumerable manuscripts, the reading ought to be חסיד in the singular number. To this authority is added notable and invincible strength by the reasoning of the two Apostles Peter and Paul, Acts ii. 27—31, and xiii. 35—37. For each of them, desirous of persuading the Jews that Jesus, after suffering the punishment of the cross, was restored to life, and was the person whom they had expected would come, employed the assertion of David respecting him who was so eminently *the servant of God*, that he should not be left under the power of death, in such a manner, as sufficiently clearly declared that they could not be refuted. Which declaration, confirmed by the tacit consent of the Jews, would have had no force, had not the reading of the word been that from which they argued.

Obs. 8. Lastly, we have reckoned among the sources of the exercise of criticism in the books of the Old Testament, at the place quoted in *obs.* 1. the Talmud and other Jewish writings, as is generally done. But we at the same time observed that this was a very trifling source, from which little of value could be derived. If, however, any real various readings can be got from Flavius Josephus, these, although not numerous, are recommended both by their antiquity and authority, provided we are satisfied that this writer found them in his copy; for he confessedly not unfrequently took great liberties in relating things from the sacred books.

§ 4.

Although, indeed, we have many aids for restoring the true reading, where it has been corrupted, in the books of the Old Testament, these, however, are by no means sufficient; and it is often proper to have recourse to critical conjecture, the cautious employment of which is, therefore, very commendable.

Obs. 1. Should any one be disposed to deny that critical conjectures are allowable in the case of the Old Testament books, it would be incumbent on him to show that no errors had crept into the manuscript copies of the Old Testament, although often transcribed, down to the times of the ancient translators; or none, at least, which might not be corrected by their means and that of the manuscripts which remain. But this no one, even moderately acquainted with the history of the Hebrew text, will ever attempt to prove, as the sacred books of the Hebrews are all of them of very remote antiquity; we may, therefore, confidently affirm that there are no books which so much require the aid of conjecture, provided it be restrained within due bounds. *Compare above*, P. i. S. i. c. iii. § 6. obs. 8.

Obs. 2. It is, indeed, very difficult to prescribe any certain rules for the exercise of critical conjecture in the Old Testament. In this a certain felicity of genius has great power, and a sort of natural feeling, which may be rendered more acute by use and ex-

ercise, and which enables one to prescribe laws for himself which he can explain and recommend more by his example than by words. But as there is nothing in itself more uncertain, more deceitful, or which may more easily degenerate into abuse and condemnable licentiousness than this conjectural criticism of the Old Testament of which we are now speaking, we do not consider it superfluous to give some general admonitions which ought to be attended to in its employment.

1. While then we are anxious that the observations we have made, § 1. obs. 3. regarding the prudent exercise of criticism in general on the Old Testament should have peculiar force in this instance—we above all wish that rashness should be abstained from. An immense mass of conjectures on the books of the Old Testament may be easily collected, which have been devised without any sufficient reason, and which are so little probable, that in many passages the received reading, in the room of which they have been substituted by their authors, is to be preferred. Let, then, conjectural criticism be prudently employed—that is, not timidly, indeed, as if one were afraid of detracting in some degree from the dignity of the sacred books—but let it be so employed, that, unless the emendation proposed should seem to recommend itself to every skilful judge, or is exercised on things of lesser moment, the interpreter should adduce reasons to which, both he himself, after having carefully weighed them, has been induced, and may without temerity hope that others also may be brought to give assent. And these reasons should be reckoned then to have the

greatest force, when it can be shewn that the received reading cannot be justly retained if the sound rules of interpreting be observed, that all the attempts also of the most learned interpreters, in clearing up in a satisfactory manner the passage, have been unsuccessful, and that no aid is supplied either by manuscripts, or the ancient versions, or finally, by the cognate Oriental dialects, for solving the difficulty. But, however, it often also happens, that where it may be less necessary to depart from the Masoretic reading and to change it by conjecture, we may yet, by substituting another, not incur the reprehension of temerity: namely, when a certain change is so agreeable to the genius of the language, or to the style of the writer, or to the context, or to the nature of the things treated of, as that, should it not be that it was written by the author as emended, the proposed emendation at least is so highly probable in itself as readily to recommend itself to the more skilful and liberal judges.

2. In the second place, that erudition, which is requisite for the proper exercise generally of criticism on the Old Testament, is most certainly required for its conjectural part. For without this, conjectures are often proposed, from which one would have abstained, if possessed of greater skill in the language or knowledge of all circumstances. And, indeed, conjectures carry along with them no degree of probability, unless consistent with the whole genius of the Hebrew language, with the style of the author, with the objects he had in view, with the whole of the context, and, in fine, with the nature of the circumstances detailed. But to all this, unless in the more

trifling instances, every one must see that no moderate degree of erudition is required.

3. Lastly, that those excellent natural gifts of the mind, which so greatly contribute to the right exercise of the criticism of the Old Testament generally, are of much value in conjectural criticism, we have already said at the commencement of this *observation*. Therefore, the more any one excels in that nice critical perception which arises from the union of rare natural gifts, and is the best source of conjectural emendation, with so much the greater care ought he to cultivate and carry it to perfection, and strive with the greater diligence to prevent it from being hurt or perverted through too much precipitancy, through a foolish love of ostentation, or the neglect of proper learning. But as no one can do all things, each one ought to guard against too much presumption, and not confound the power of imagining, which is generally in youth more keen and active, with that admirable critical perception, which, he who has received from nature, generally manifests most successfully only in mature age. But of whatever age one may be who exercises conjectural criticism, he ought never to be too confident in himself, nor desire arrogantly to obtrude on others the imaginations of a luxuriant genius, in the place of that truth of which there is no room for doubt, but ought so to propose his conjectures that at least he may gain from all the praise of modesty.

Obs. 3. But we think that it will be proper briefly to shew in what cases that criticism of which we are now speaking, may with propriety be applied, adduc-

ing at the same time examples where we shall deem it principally useful. This brief and succinct exposition we shall arrange in the same order of things, as we followed in our survey of the various faults in the Hebrew text, § 2. obs. 4—7.

1. Critical conjecture then may be very often and very usefully employed upon the vowel points, which have a reference to the reading and grammatical form of the words, and be applied to changing them, wherever it may be required; and this too the more freely, as errors were more easily committed in them. We do not, however, wish this to be so understood, as if we were of opinion that these should be lightly changed at will solely. For we attribute this degree of authority to the Masoretic points, that we hold that they ought not to be receded from without sufficient reasons.

There are, indeed, some of the moderns who keep no bounds in this matter, and who act so as if the whole Masoretic mode of writing was of recent invention, and that almost no attention was due to it: and consequently, that it would be almost better to use the Hebrew Bible without points, and to add such points to each word as they might choose. But the Masorites, who followed partly points already subjoined,^a and partly added to words wanting points, those, which they believed, from the pronunciation of their fathers, should be subjoined, and in all cases en-

* The Translator, though anxious to avoid loading the text with notes and disquisitions, for reasons assigned in the preface, cannot, however, allow this assertion of the author to pass without notice, because, in his judgment, the notion intended to be

deavoured to express the ancient pronounciation with the utmost fidelity and scrupulous exactness, and to propagate it to posterity, have, indeed, a right to some, and that no slight degree of authority. As,

impressed on the reader is one attended with most injurious consequences to the study and advancement of Hebrew literature, and consequently to the acquisition of true biblical knowledge. This notion of some points having always belonged to the Hebrew language, and the attempt, from this fiction, of attaching a most undue degree of authority to the whole Masoretic punctuation, seems to prevail so strongly in our author's mind, as that he hesitates not to inculcate it on all occasions, and to defend it almost at any expense. See Vol. i. p. 29. The translator does not intend at present to enter into this subject so fully as it deserves, and as he thinks requires, but shall content himself with simply referring to some high and very recent authorities, who must be allowed to be impartial on this point. He shall begin with that of De Wette, who, whatever may be thought of the strange and dangerous tendency of many of his opinions, will, from his scholarship, be readily allowed to be a most competent and impartial judge in this case. One reason for quoting from him is, that he gives the evidence of Jerome at full length. In his "Manual of the Historico-Critical Introduction to the Old Testament," at p. 131, he thus expresses himself. "Till the time of Jerome the text was still *without points, and even without diacritical marks.* Idem sermo et iisdem literis scriptus, diversas apud eos et voces et intelligentias habet, e. c. *Pastores et Amatores iisdem literis scribuntur,* Resch, Ain, Jod, Mem, רעים: sed Pastores *Roim* leguntur, Amatores *Reim.* Hieronymi epist. 125 ad Damascen.—Nou refert utrum *Salem* an *Salim*, שלם, nominetur, cum vocalibus perraro utantur Hebræi, et pro *voluntate lectorum* atque varietate regionum eadem verba *diversis sonis et accentibus* proferrantur. Epist. 126, ad Evagr.—Pro eo quod nos transtulimus *mortem*, in Hebræo tres literæ sunt positæ, Daleth, Beth, Resch,

however, they might easily make mistakes, and very numerous errors in the points were inevitable; and since manuscripts have been but rarely collated as to the points, whilst in the early age, in which the an-

absque ulla vocali, quæ si legantur *dabar*, *verbum* significant; si *deber*, *pestem*. Commentar. in Hab. iii. 5.—Verbum \beth pro qualitate loci, et *posuit*, intelligitur, et *ibi*. Hab. iii. 4.—Other passages of Jerome, such as his remark on Genes. xlvii. 33.—Hoc loco quidem frustra simulant, adorasse Jacob summitatem *sceptri*, . . . cum in *Hebræo multum aliter legatur*: et adoravit Israel ad caput *lectuli*;—only express the confidence which he had in the correctness of his own interpretation.”—And at page 147 we find these words: “From the history of the external condition of the text of the Old Testament it is evident, that the *consonants alone* form the proper object of the criticism of the Old Testament, and, that too without any regard to the division of words; which, along with the punctuation and accentuation, must be finally decided by the principles of interpretation and grammar, although great weight is to be attached to the Jewish tradition, followed in the recension of the text: the critical testimonies for which must accordingly be duly examined.”

The translator is of opinion that De Wette, has in this passage indicated rightly the degree of authority which ought to be attached to the Masoretic punctuation—namely, that it is to be considered as the interpretation which the Jews began in the 5th or 6th century, (but which was not completed as we now have it, till long afterwards,) to give of the meaning of the Hebrew scriptures from their knowledge of that language derived from tradition. It is, therefore, to be looked upon as an ancient version of the Hebrew scriptures, but by no means as of equal antiquity or authority as the pure text, could we attain it, of the Alexandrine Greek version, particularly the best executed portion of that version. While then, on the one hand, it is unjustifiable, in one pretending to be a scripture critic, to

cient versions were made, points were not always subjoined to the text; it is certainly allowable in every case, in the absence of authorities, to change the Masoretic points by conjecture alone, wherever,

neglect, or be unacquainted with this ancient Rabbinical version or interpretation of the Old Testament, proceeding from such competent and diligent authors; it is, on the other, much more condemnable to know the Hebrew scriptures only through the medium of this interpretation, which is the case with those who cannot read or understand them without the Masoretic punctuation, as those calling themselves Punctualists are generally incapable of doing. Nay, those who read those scriptures always or generally with the Masoretic points should recollect that they are then only reading an interpretation of them, and that a Jewish one: and whatever has been said, or may be said, of the great, scrupulous, and even superstitious reverence of that nation for their scriptures being a sufficient security for their fidelity (which in some cases, however, seems more than doubtful); this reverence can be no security against their prejudices, which have always been of the most gross and inveterate kind. To this view it seems manifest that the Germans are becoming inclined, as we learn from the acknowledgment of one of their first Hebrew scholars and critics, (Bleek) in his review of Professor Stewart's (of Andover) Commentary on the Hebrews. The following quotation is from Stewart's reply to that criticism in his third edition, from which it will also appear that he does not dissent from this opinion. "All the departure," says Stewart, "from the Hebrew in the above passage, consists in reading **בְּאִבִּי**,

scourgeth, afflicteth, instead of our present Hebrew punctuation **בְּאָבִי**, as a father. But surely this writer, who alleges such

a discrepancy as this, does not need to be told that the present Masoretic punctuation is the offspring of the fifth or sixth century of the Christian era; and that the author of the

either grammatical reasons, the context, or the nature of the circumstances, seem particularly to require it. But they ought only to be changed with skill, or agreeably to the genius of the Hebrew language, and at the same time for reasons of a simple nature which carry along with them the greatest appearance of truth.

2. Fewer errors should be supposed to have taken place in the letters than in the points, and in correcting these also, there are fewer occasions for resorting to conjecture. In this case manuscripts are of great use, and the ancient versions of still greater. But as, through various causes, it has happened that frequent errors have been committed in writing the letters, and for correcting these, we have not sufficient authoritative aids at all times and upon all occasions : with regard to them also, when it is requisite, and

epistle, who read Hebrew without vowel points, read it as the Seventy did, and, as Bleek himself acknowledges, *perhaps in a way preferable to the Masoretic punctuation.*" p. 165.

In addition to these authorities for the whole system of punctuation, accentuation, and diacritical points being solely the invention of the Masorites from the 5th or 6th century downwards, and consequently, for the simple letters being the only real text of the Hebrew scriptures, we shall only subjoin that of Rosenmuller in his Prolegomena to the Pentateuch, (scholia in Vet. Test. Tom. i. p. 32. Ed. Tert. Lips. 1821.) "Denique in omni hac quæstione de Hebræi sermonis in Pentateucho indole reputandum est, linguas eas, quibus Hebræa accensetur, quum in scribendo vocum consonæ tantum poni soleant (nam signa vocalium, quibus codicis Hebræi hodierna exempla sunt instructa, ævo recenti esse adjecta, vix est quod moneamus,) multo minus in scriptis variare, quam nostras, quæ et vocalium enunciationem literis exprimunt."—*Transl.*

when there are sufficiently weighty reasons, an interpreter may resort to conjecture, especially when the changes proposed are justified by the similitude, transposition, easy omission, or addition of letters.—This, however, as well as the former rule, is at the present day so fully acknowledged, that, from the brevity of which we are studious, we consider it unnecessary to give any illustrations.

3. As errors are, in various ways, committed in whole words, and all errors of this sort cannot be rectified by means of the critical aids which we possess, conjecture occasionally is not disallowed with regard to these, provided proper reasons are adduced, from either the nature of the subject or the circumstances: which we shall now proceed to illustrate by a very few selected examples, having reference merely to the principal cases in which conjectural criticism should chiefly be employed.

We have no doubt then, that frequently whole words have been either altogether omitted, which can only be restored by conjecture: or, after they had been omitted in the text, were written in the margin, and afterwards inserted in the wrong place, and consequently can only by conjecture be rightly replaced. We think that Job ix. 21. affords an instance of the first of these cases, where we find the latter hemistick too short—תם אני—*were I perfect*, which Job had already twice used with great emphasis, and which, therefore, might easily the third time have been omitted, seems to have fallen out of the text. A passage in the same book, Chap. xiv. 4, is an instance of the second case, where again the last hemistick is too

short, but may be brought nearer to its just length, if עמך לא אחדר be substituted as the reading—עמך having been first omitted and then written on the margin, but afterwards improperly put into the text, at the end of the 3d verse, where, if it were not, no one would feel the want of it ; and besides, the sense brought out by the proposed transposition, is admirably adapted to the whole series of ideas ; being, “ any one may declare him, who is accounted by the judgment of man guilty and impure, to be pure and innocent, and acquit him of blame ; but who can do this when God is the judge ? ”

What is found in the same book, chap. xxxix. 1. עת לדרת has greatly the appearance of a gloss, added to the margin for the sake of explanation, the hemistick being too long, and because too in verse 2d, the *time of their bringing forth* is spoken of: holding this to be the case, then the word ידע will aptly signify *to take care of*, and its synonym שמר *to provide for*. —And to bring another example from this very ancient book, which affords ample room for critical conjectures of transposition, and at the same time of a new division of words, we conjecture that in chap. xxx. 12. the reading ought to be רגל ישהו עלי, *they attack me with a hostile foot* : from this change both the meaning becomes somewhat easier, and the verse can be much more conveniently divided into three members.

Finally, as it is a very probable opinion that the ancient Hebrews used the letters of the Alphabet for expressing their numbers, hence occasionally it is allowable by an easy conjecture to amend a corrupt-

ed passage. Such most certainly is that of 1 Sam. xiii. 1, where the received reading does not admit of a tolerable meaning. But it can scarcely be doubted that the *number* of the years of Saul's age before he began to reign, had there fallen out before **שנה**, and it is conjectured with the greatest probability that the letter **ל**, by which *thirty* was denoted, had fallen out: which conjecture derives some degree of authority from the fact that an anonymous interpreter in Origen's Hexapla translates *υἱος τριάκοντα ἔτηων*. But what follows is more nearly connected with our purpose. For Saul is there said to have reigned *two years*, when he proposed this warlike expedition of which he assigned a share to his son Jonathan; because from the common manner of narration, the second verse, from its coherence with the first, indicates this fact. But as a son of Saul, when at that age, could not be qualified for the office of a general, the whole difficulty vanishes, if, as we conjecture, Saul be supposed to have reigned *twenty years*, when he and his son addressed themselves to this war. Now, indeed, nothing is more simple and easy than this conjecture, if we suppose that the letter **כ**, by which the number *twenty* is indicated, was written, and was afterwards changed into the letter **ב** so similar in its form: hence **ב** being the mark of the number *two*, **שתי** at full length was inserted in room of it.

4. It remains for us to shew what conjecture can do where errors have been committed in certain larger or lesser clauses.

First then, as transcribers sometimes through mis-

take omitted a whole clause which they overlooked, we may occasionally detect the error, but we cannot by conjecture rightly supply it; for instance, in the xxxiv. Psalm, which is an alphabetical composition, a whole verse is wanting, beginning with the letter γ ; for though two of De Rossi's manuscripts distribute verse 6th, beginning with the letter η into two separate verses, of which the latter begins with γ , yet, this is by no means conformable to the structure of the whole hymn, each of whose verses consists of two members.—In like manner, there is great cause of suspicion that a whole clause has fallen in Dan. ii. 46, 47. There we read that Nebuchadnezzar offered divine honours to Daniel, who had been alone able to tell and interpret to him his dream, and yet it is added that immediately he humbly adored God, who had revealed these secrets to him. Now then, as it cannot be doubted that Daniel vehemently refused these honours, and declared that they were due to God alone, by whose aid he had been enabled to do what he did; and when of itself, by collating verse 30th, it is highly probable that he in his very full narration of this story, had not neglected this circumstance: it is a very probable conjecture that his notice of it had fallen out of the text after verse 46th; and if this be granted, what follows in ver. 47 will then be far better understood.

But, secondly, as it may have easily happened, that a clause, which the transcriber afterwards perceived that he had omitted, should be inserted in the place to which it did not belong: conjecture may without improbability of success attempt to detect and

correct such an error. Of this sort the passage in Job iii. 16 seems to be, which, as it interrupts the continuity of the description of the rest to be hoped for by the wretched in the grave, should have been placed between verses 12 and 13.—Of a somewhat different kind, but which we think comes under this head, is the passage of Psalm lxxx. 16, in which the word וַעַל, and those which follow even to the end of the verse, so interrupt the train of thought that they cannot be explained in any tolerable way. But the same words are clearly repeated in verse 18th, where they are quite suitable: for the diversity of reading in these passages found in the received text, does not exist in many manuscripts or in the ancient versions. Therefore, as in the middle of each of these verses the word יַמִּינֶךָ occurs, we are of opinion that the transcriber was easily led to omit the interposed words; and when, after having transcribed the second part of the 18th verse, he perceived this error, he did not delete what he had by mistake written, but went on to add what had been omitted, appending to it perhaps some mark of his error, which time wore out, or of which afterwards no proper notice was taken. Throwing away then that clause from the 16th verse, its first hemistick is to be taken from the third member of the 15th verse, i. e. is to be made to consist of its three last words; so as that the 15th verse, like most in the Psalm, may consist of only two members.

It belongs to cautious conjectural criticism also to determine what are glosses, or observations of greater

or less length added for the sake of explanation, which are now improperly inserted in the text. But caution is here requisite, that we do not rashly reject every thing which may seem to interrupt the course of the narration, or to be not quite agreeable to it, as additions of an after age.—Therefore, of those historical or geographical observations which are inserted in the addresses of Moses, contained in the book of Deuteronomy, the greater part at least, if not the whole, are with more correctness to be accounted to have proceeded from Moses himself, who was quite, and only equal to have made them; and which he added when he wrote out these addresses for the use of his countrymen.—In like manner, we do not think that there are sufficient reasons why we should, along with some interpreters of the present day, determine certain clauses in 1 Sam. xvii. to be spurious, and improperly added to the text at a more recent period. For part of them are somewhat long, and none of them have any appearance of being glosses: and the reason why the whole may have a less strict coherence should rather be ascribed to the narration there being composed of two different historical documents which the author conjoined: of which mode of writing history, not an unusual one among the ancient Hebrews, we shall treat in its proper place. As to the difficulties objected to, we do not think they are of such a nature as that they may not plausibly be obviated. The principal is that which we shall adduce, and is contained in verses 55—58. David is there represented as unknown to Saul and Abner, when pro-

ceeding to vanquish Goliath: a circumstance altogether improbable. But Abner is not said to have been present when he declared his purpose to Saul and was preparing to execute it, ver. 32—40. When, however, he afterwards did come, he did not even suspect that it was David, whose back he only saw, dressed as a shepherd, who was the person going against the Philistine. Saul, who was given to dissimulation, secretly wishing to vex that ambitious warrior, ordered him to ask who this youth, more daring than himself, was. After the exploit was successfully performed, Abner approached and acknowledged David: but, astonished by the greatness of the action, he put no questions to him, but considered it enough to bring him to the king: who, in order to vex the already perplexed Abner the more, pretended that he did not know who the conqueror of this terrible enemy was, and in the presence of Abner interrogated him. In this way no difficulty remains; nay even, the affair is narrated in a manner quite congenial with the character of Saul.—But as to what is related in the same book, chap. vi. 19, of fifty thousand men besides seventy others, instantly dying from looking into the ark; the greater of these numbers, both from the singular and very unusual construction, and also from the nature of the thing, savours much of a gloss added in some way to the margin, which afterwards crept into the text, as remarked by some recent interpreters.—We subjoin another example of a different and less common sort. Psalm xxx. seems to us to have a double title, the one ancient and genuine, the other more recent and spurious. The former is comprised

in these words מזמור לדוד alone; the later, of the words interposed between these, which some one, intending to mark the occasion of the poem, but quite mistaken in his opinion, noted on the margin, from which afterwards they were put into the middle of the title.

Finally, we have no doubt, but that things which should have been conjoined were disjoined, and things which should have been disjoined were conjoined, in the writings of the Old Testament: when, however, the one or other of these alternatives took place, and how they are to be restored to their original places, the most sagacious and most skilful in conjecturing will not be always able to say. But one ought to take care, lest, forgetting as it were that he is employed on the most ancient of all writings and urged on by an itch for changing, he should attempt to reduce every part to a better and more modern style of arrangement. For in the historical writings a correct order is not always observed, and this defect of order is to be attributed to the authors alone: and in the poetical parts, so sudden are sometimes the transitions from one subject to another, and so unexpected the changes of feelings and affections, that one might easily conjecture that a poem did not belong to one author or one age, when in reality we ought to attribute any such neglect of correct composition only to the less cultivated taste and greater poetic impetuosity of the Orientals.—But however, sufficiently probable and quite satisfactory reasons may in some cases be adduced to shew that certain passages have been

improperly conjoined or disjoined. Of the former kind an example occurs in the xl. Psalm, which cannot be doubted of. For the whole of this poem cannot have been originally composed by David as it is now read in the book of Psalms. It should end with verse 12, and the verses which follow, all on to the end, have so different a subject, and express such different feelings, as that this last part can in no way in the least satisfactory be referred to the same time and occasion. And this part too from verse 14th, occurs again with slight changes in the lxx. Psalm, as a poem of David's; and there also would be more rightly, as has been observed by some commentators, conjoined with the following Psalm, which has no title, into one poem. We must, therefore, determine the present form of the xl. Psalm to be due to a later age: which form, however, we do not attribute to the sheets of manuscripts being improperly joined together, but rather to design in the Jews, who, after their return from captivity, sometimes wished to accommodate certain of the more ancient poems by the addition of some verses to their circumstances at the time: and in this they were not always equally happy.—But we may ascribe to improperly conjoined sheets, the disjunction of some other poetical writings which are now separated, and in particular, as we feel assured, Psalms lxxvii. and lxxx. For the former of these ends too abruptly, and the first verse of the second of them joins most aptly with the last verse of the former; so that by their junction one complete poem, coherent in all its parts, is formed. It seems probable that to the last of these Psalms, when

it began to be reckoned a separate poem, a title was added, which gave it to the same Asaph as its author : which was probably owing to its great similitude in subject and poetic diction with the former.

PART SECOND.

SECTION FIFTH.

OF THE VERSIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT,
AND OF WRITING COMMENTARIES AND
ANNOTATIONS ON IT.

§ 1.

A translation of any book or part of the Old Testament ought to be faithful and accurate, but not too servilely verbal: and we can only approve of the paraphractical mode of translation, when required or useful for the illustration of certain passages.

Obs. 1. Having hitherto treated of those things which we consider as having a reference to the interpretation of the Old Testament in general, it remains for us in this place to attend to those things that we think should be principally observed both in translating the writings of the Old Testament into another language, and in illustrating them at large, or more

briefly: but on this part of our subject we shall not dwell long, but dismiss it in a few words.

Obs. 2. As the turning of any writing into another language has, or certainly ought to have, this object, to express accurately the sense of the author as much as possible: it is the duty of an interpreter of the Old Testament to bestow the greatest pains on attaining this virtue of accuracy, because the style of language employed in the Old Testament is widely different from that employed by the men of our age and nation. Therefore, that too free manner of translation is not in general to be approved, by which the colour of the Oriental style is for the most part quite destroyed, or certainly so much weakened and defaced, as scarcely, if at all possible to be recognized. And should this mode of translating be applied to the poetical writings, we shall detract very much indeed, from the remarkable force and excellence of the poetic style of the Hebrews. We certainly quite approve of an interpreter's being studious of purity and elegance of language in translating; but the aim at these becomes blameable, unless restrained and directed by a strict attention to fidelity. We then consider the highest excellence of a translation to consist in this, that what is peculiar to the Oriental style, whether in prose or poetry, as far as the nature of the language into which the translation is made allows, be so retained as that he who reads the translation shall understand it, and at the same time feel that it is an Oriental writer whom he is perusing. This is, indeed, a most arduous undertaking, from the very alien nature of the Hebrew language and style: but the difficulty is not

insuperable to him who is not altogether deficient in genius, and who labours to acquire skill in the Hebrew language, an understanding of the writer whom he translates, and, in fine, an intimate acquaintance with the language into which he translates, without which, even though endowed with the greatest natural talents, he will have little success. He then who wishes well and faithfully to translate any part of the Old Testament into another language, should endeavour to the utmost of his power to give a true picture, or at least a *shade*,^a of the author, such as every good judge may recognize and approve. This, in our age, which is esteemed highly cultivated, will deserve the greatest praise; and will also highly conduce to protect and augment the reputation of the writers of the Old Testament, particularly of the poets.

Obs. 3. From what we have said, it is sufficiently manifest, that while we require of an interpreter of the Old Testament a faithful and accurate mode of translation, we by no means wish it to be servile, scrupulously and solicitously adhering to the very words. For one who proceeds in this way, will, in our judgment, be so far from deserving the praise of fidelity, that he frequently will not only not translate, as it seems to us, sufficiently faithfully and accurately, but will occasionally give a meaning quite at variance with the sense of the writer. Thus the expression, in which God is said to *harden the heart* of any one, is right, if we look at the words only, but quite wrong, if we regard the signification which the context requires; from which

^a “ Ut veram scriptoris sui imaginem exprimat, certe *adumbret*.”

its meaning appears to be, to *permit to be hardened, to leave one to his obstinacy*, (*Compare S. ii. § 7. obs. 3.*): and consequently the fidelity and accuracy of translation require that the interpreter use those words which correctly express what the writer meant to say, and not those implying quite a different thing.—In the second place, we observe, that it is occasionally useful, in those places, in which, on account of the differences between the languages, the translation itself is more free and carefully accommodated to the sense of the writer, to translate in the *scholia* the expression literally, or word for word, and thus to give clear indications of the fidelity which is endeavoured to be attained.—Again, we briefly and not unnecessarily remark, that the peculiar and primary meanings of words should not be substituted in the translation, unless either the writer himself had a respect to these, and really intended them, or, when a word exists in the language into which the translation is made, which agrees both in its primary and secondary meaning with the word for which it is put, and which, consequently, particularly in translating a poet, is of all others the most fit one.—Lastly, we observe, that things occur in the Hebrew which cannot be expressed in a translation: such as words alike in sound, but different in signification, where *paronomasia*, as it is called, takes place, and which, if ever, certainly can very rarely be expressed in a translation.

Obs. 4. We readily allow that a paraphractical manner of translating, for the purpose of illustrating certain more obscure passages, and those written in a more condensed style, is often most useful, when one

employs it opportunely in the notes added to his translation : but we most strongly disapprove of the translation itself being paraphrastical. In some places, indeed, the translator who studies perspicuity is obliged to add more words to his version than are in the Hebrew text : but continual paraphrases destroy the whole colour of the Oriental language, and the peculiar nature of the style employed by the writer ; and these paraphrases weaken the force particularly of the poetical writings.

Obs. 5. Lastly, we by no means advise the translator of the present day to follow the practice which has generally prevailed in modern times, of writing the verses of each chapter as if they were different and unconnected sections, except in the case of the poetical parts, which it is quite proper should be exhibited in the translation not only in distinct verses, but even with the members of each verse distinct. But certainly in the prose writings, a division of this sort causes more confusion than advantage, particularly as the ignorant and unlearned take these verses for as many separate sections of the divine word which are to be considered by themselves. Therefore, the translation should rather be continued on unbroken, and no new paragraph commenced, unless where the nature of the subject seems to require it, disregarding even the division into chapters where necessary.

§ 2.

When it is wished to illustrate any part of the Old Testament by notes, whether brief or

more copious, he will, in this respect, discharge the whole duties of a good interpreter, who, while he endeavours to illustrate the true sense of his author, consults as much as possible brevity and perspicuity.

Obs. 1. The common maxim, that good may be accomplished in various ways, holds in writing annotations on the Old Testament. In this department one may more particularly employ himself in criticism, another may apply himself to the interpretation of words, and another to that of things, and yet, each in his own way, may do valuable service to the Old Testament. But, however, should any one be desirous of rightly fulfilling the part of a good interpreter in all respects, he should conjoin criticism, and the interpretation of words, and the exposition of things. And he is to be considered as directing his aim best, who, whether writing *scholia* or brief notes, or attempting a complete and more ample commentary, for the illustration of any writing, keeps steadily in view that primary object which is the chief duty of an interpreter, an endeavour to enlighten others as to the real meaning of the writer, such as he himself considers he has attained; to the accomplishment of which purpose every one must readily see how greatly perspicuity conduces.

Obs. 2. We do not consider it necessary, not even in commentaries, always and on every passage to repeat the various opinions of other interpreters, and

to discuss them with care. We are not here speaking of the ancient interpreters, the accurate consideration of whose versions and their comparison with the Hebrew text, and perpending what is the ground of each of them, although not in every case necessary, are yet attended with the greatest utility, both as to discovering the peculiar genius of each of them, and likewise to their general critical and occasionally hermeneutical use. But we are here speaking of the other interpreters of whatever age, but particularly the Christian: in reviewing whose different opinions, both the commentator and reader experience for the most part great weariness, while, not unfrequently very little aid for the better understanding of the author is derived. It is, however, not without its use to state the principal opinions of others, particularly in doubtful, obscure, or difficult passages, but chiefly when one is himself in doubt what sense should be preferred. And there may sometimes be other reasons which may induce a prudent interpreter to bring forward and refute the specious opinions of others. But, generally speaking, the more one consults brevity and elegance of interpretation, the more in the present day will he abstain from troublesome and unnecessary disquisitions into different opinions: and he will, for the most part, consider it sufficient to propose his own opinion, to illustrate it by such reasons as may seem sufficient to establish it, and to submit his views with modesty to the reader, who may, if he will, compare it with those of others; neither will he be afraid of not obtaining the assent of more skilful and candid judges, provid-

ed his opinion be really in itself more correct than that of others. The remarks which we have here briefly made apply almost solely to what is usually called a learned interpretation of the Old Testament. In what we may call a popular interpretation, we should be even much more studious of simplicity and brevity; and that should be alone aimed at which may be most serviceable to the common people.

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

PART THIRD.

OF THE PARTICULAR INTERPRETATION OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

SECTION FIRST.

OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE HISTORICAL WRITERS.

CHAPTER FIRST.

ON RIGHTLY DISTINGUISHING THE HISTORICAL WRITINGS
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

§ 1.

There being, in respect of subject and style, a remarkable diversity among the writers of the Old Testament, an interpreter must pay particular attention to this diversity.

Obs. 1. All the writings of the Old Testament have this in common, that, with the exception of a very few passages written in Chaldee, a dialect near

to the Hebrew, the whole of them are composed in one and the same language, and consequently the same Oriental nature pervades each. But in this sameness of language, they are not so completely similar to each other in all respects, as that what we have yet said regarding them can be deemed sufficient. For such is the diversity both of subject and style, as that in so narrow a compass of writings, a greater can scarcely be imagined. Although, then, we have already, when a convenient opportunity occurred, had regard to both these sorts of diversities, there are more things deserving of the attention of a good interpreter with regard to this subject, which must, particularly in our times, be considered apart and specially. It will, however, be generally allowed, that what we have said regarding criticism is in all points quite enough for the nature of our undertaking.

Obs. 2. The Hebrew writings then, being usually distinguished into historical, poetical, and prophetic, and as in this division there is something very much adapted to the nature of the subject, we shall proceed to treat of each of these in a separate section. We shall also subjoin a section on the philosophical writings, which, although not many, and not comprehending a great range of subject, do not seem unworthy of having a few separate observations bestowed on them.

§ 2.

When then we speak of the historical writ-

ings of the Old Testament, we mean all those parts which are historical, found in books of whatever title, and which we consider ought to be carefully distinguished from the other parts.

Obs. 1. Every one knows that a considerably large portion of the Old Testament is designated by the name of historical books. But in some other books, not usually called historical, there are found historical narrations, as in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel: which, therefore, it will be easily understood we must have respect to. Besides, things are related in the poetical book of Job and in the prophetic one of Jonah, which have an historical form and appearance, and consequently, as far as concerns their style, must be interpreted in the same way as histories; but of which it may fairly be doubted whether they are to be reckoned altogether historical or not. It certainly seems probable to us, that both these books contain things described not as they happened, but which true histories gave a handle for composing, as we have already said in P. i. S. i. C. v. § 4. *obs. 1.*: an opinion particularly recommending itself as most adapted for diminishing the difficulties and displaying the innate excellencies of both books.

Obs. 2. Besides the speeches in prose detailed in the historical books, and properly considered as part of the histories, there are in them occasionally poetical parts, which although closely connected with the histories themselves, have a different style and nature,

and must, therefore, be explained according to the rules of poetical *exegesis*, and do not belong to this section. For what is occasionally observed in Arabic historians was anciently, while poetry flourished, in use among the Hebrews; the practice, I mean, of interspersing in their histories poetical passages, which had a respect to the things narrated, and contained an expression of the sentiments and feelings of the mind poured out at the time and on the occasion.

Obs. 3. Poems, indeed, of this kind, often and usefully employed for the confirmation and illustration of the histories to which they belong, are easily distinguished from the historical narrations, and there can be no controversy regarding this distinguishment. But it has become customary with some modern philologists to assert that certain remarkable passages of the Old Testament, heretofore in every age accounted historical, are poetical. They began with the description of the formation of the earth, in the first chapter of Genesis, which they considered as set forth in some sort of poetical dress. Next, this hypothesis pleasing many from its agreeable novelty, was applied, as usually happens, to some of the other first chapters of the same book. Nay, not only some historical parts of the less ancient books were insensibly, and by degrees, confidently, and, as if not to be doubted of, transferred to the poetical class, but even the whole of some of the shorter books, such as Ruth and Esther, were estimated to contain historical poetry. Whether this was done properly or improperly, let us now see.

Obs. 4. No long disquisition will be required to satisfy those who have no prejudice in favour of novel-

ty, what ought to be thought of this invention of historical poetry. For let us grant to them for a little that the ancient Hebrews had a historical poetry : are there then any sufficiently sure and clear marks by which we can distinguish it from the historical narrations? There are, you will say. The latter relate things as they happened : the former delineates a history, partly fictitious, partly true indeed, but dressed up and adorned. All well! but tell us how we are to distinguish that which is fictitious from what is true, and how we are to strip off the ornamental dress, and thus transform the poetry into history.—But without taking into consideration the truth of the histories, although that is not a little diminished by this new designation, we put this one question; are all the historical relations of the Old Testament, or only some of them, to be designated by this name? If you choose the latter of these alternatives, we confess that we are altogether incapable of distinguishing in a style of narration for the most part so equable and most simple, what is historical from what is poetical; and we shall not find ourselves entitled to refuse the dignity of the poetical name even to the genealogical tables, when we recollect the simple and almost dry catalogue of the ships in the poetry of the second Iliad, which is reckoned by all a part of the poem. But if you choose the former alternative, which you must do, however unwillingly, if you wish to be consistent: then, indeed, the ancient Hebrews must be esteemed to have no real historical writings; and certainly, when we look at the style of composition, we should rather be inclined to ennoble, or rather debase, the

books of Livy's Roman history, composed in an ornate style, with the title of historical poetry, than compositions of such humble style as those of Ruth and Esther, or the other historical books of the Old Testament, not excepting that of Judges, which describes the heroic times of the Hebrews.

Obs. 5. If inclined to act ingenuously, and not descend to quibbles, we are forced to confess that there is a marked and easily distinguishable difference between the poetic, and historical or prose, style of the Hebrews. What this difference is, two examples, quite adapted for our purpose, will show to almost every person, as they exhibit poems celebrating in a highly poetic manner a memorable action which had been narrated historically; the first contained in Exod. c. xv., the second in Judg. c. v.: which passages, if any one will look at, with a mind free from every prejudice, he cannot fail to perceive how much poetical description among the Hebrews differs from historical. But what is more, and in this case of so great moment as to seem altogether to determine the point, we see in every part of Hebrew poetry, a certain peculiar structure, by which every single verse is distinct from another, and each of them distributed into certain members, mutually answering to each other: which artificial structure it is sufficient here simply to indicate, as it will be more fully treated of in its proper place. And, as this most certain character of parallelism, as it is called, is utterly wanting in those writings which are referred by some late authors to the class of poetical history, we with the greatest justice deny to these writings, the right of being de-

nominated poetry, by whatever appellation it may be designated, and are almost inclined to ridicule the attempts of those who, in their translation, distort these historical passages into some sort of equable distribution of their clauses. But the genuine parallelism of sentiments in verses, is so ancient in the writings of the Old Testament, that a clear example of it occurs so early as in Genesis iv. 23, 24; which, should one compare with the poetical description, as some will have it, of the creation of the world in the first chapter of Genesis, and endeavour to find this peculiar mark of Hebrew poetry also in it, he will never persuade us to be of his opinion.

Obs. 6. But should any one perchance ask, whether then we are of opinion, that no such thing as historical poetry is to be ascribed to the ancient Hebrews, we without hesitation say they have none such in that sense in which this denomination is understood. We confess that there are many poems, to the composition of which historical events gave occasion, such particularly as are found in the book of Psalms: nay even there are not altogether wanting, some of these which contain a historical detail in the order of time, such as Psalms lxxviii.; cv.; cvi.: but besides that these were principally composed with the intention of being sung in divine worship, they contain, as well as all the other poems, the clear characteristic of Hebrew poetry which appears in the parallelism of sentiments. And so tenacious were the ancient Hebrew writers of observing this discrimination which distinguishes poetry from history, that the very ancient author of the book of Job has conformed only the dialogue to the poetic

character, but has related the events in the historical style.

Obs. 7. But those, however, who designate the most ancient parts, at least of the Book of Genesis, by the name and title of historical poetry, have something to say by which they would recommend their opinion, or at least would desire to do so. They are frequently repeating that poetry long precedes simple prose narration: and that as this was the case among other ancient nations, we cannot with propriety say, that among the Hebrews alone it was not so. But, indeed, we are not quite sure that the term poetry is here understood in its usual, or at least its proper signification. We acknowledge that the diction of those who lived in the early ages was the more figurative, in proportion as they were more in some degree in the state of children, and that their style of language was such as is employed by uncultivated nations in the present day, especially when they speak of highly memorable events, or such as are adapted to excite the affections or passions. Nor, however, can we allow that this, though similar to poetry, is rightly denominated by that title, without altogether confounding it with that which is distinguished from it by a peculiar form. Shall we indeed pronounce all men, who from their condition manifest a boyish state of mind, to be poets, or every uncultivated style of language poured out with a certain degree of vehemence and powerful feeling to be truly poetry? Nay, we find among the more modern barbarous and less cultivated nations, poems composed in a sort of numbers, and in general intended to be sung, in which there is

some, and that too, no slight difference, by which they may be distinguished from what we call prose, even when full of images and figures. Again, we indeed grant that it was usual among some ancient nations, and among the Arabians themselves, who were very nearly allied to the Hebrews, before any continuous history was written, to celebrate certain historical events in poems intended to be committed to memory: but we have not seen it proved, nor do we believe it ever can be proved, that we must absolutely attribute the same thing as customary to all other ancient nations. It is not difficult to shew that the use of writing certainly reached back to a very early period in that part of the East where the Hebrews lived; and it is not, therefore, in itself improbable, that even in the most ancient times, certain particularly remarkable occurrences were consigned to letters.—Lastly, as the more figurative language adapted for representing events to the external senses which appears in the first eleven chapters of Genesis may be easily explained, both from their greater antiquity, and from the proximity to the state in which a puerile mode of speaking prevails; so, on the other hand, should they be reduced to the class of historical poetry, we fear not confidently to assert, that it can never be explained in any probable way, how it happens that in the books of Kings themselves, and consequently long after it appears that the historical annals of the Hebrews began to be committed to writing, historical poems were conjoined in a continuous and unbroken series with relations in prose, distinguished by no particular form of composition, so

that there is no mark of where they begin and where they end.

Obs. 8. But there is something farther which must not be altogether passed over by us on this occasion, as it may be objected to our opinion of the marked difference between the Hebrew poetical and prose style,—namely, that there are passages which it is difficult to determine whether they should be referred to the one class of writings or the other ; for that there are certain doubtful passages of this sort observable in some longer and shorter discourses must be allowed, nay, it is scarcely possible to deny that there is occasionally an appearance of poetic parallelism in historical narratives, where no poetry could at all be imagined to exist. In order therefore that every one may understand the nature and strength of this objection, we desire that the distinction between the more ancient and recent times of the Hebrews should be carefully and diligently kept in mind. Certainly then, as in the more early periods, the genius of the Hebrews was wonderfully suited to poetry, men, even from among the lower ranks, when they felt themselves, from any circumstance, more than usually excited, were accustomed, not uncommonly, to express their feelings in a few verses ; so that these, when inserted in a continued historical narrative, may not appear to be uttered in a different style from the rest. To this we refer that very short funeral dirge sung by David at the exequies of Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 33, 34 ; and also that somewhat more sublime and partly proverbial effusion of Samuel, 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23 ; and in like manner, the prayer poured out by the women on the

birth of a male child by Ruth, iv. 14, 15. And the author of the book of Job, conforming himself to this manner, brings in Job even in the historical part, expressing, as we think, in a few verses, the admirable feelings of his submissive soul under the most overwhelming misfortunes, c. i. 21, and ii. 10. Neither do we doubt that the very simple words of Job in answer to God, marked as they are by poetic parallelism, must be held to be poetical, c. xl. 4, 5; xlii. 2—6. Since such was the case, and the genius of the Hebrews was so adapted and inclined to poetry, it might have happened that a person, in a discourse of some length, when speaking of things by which he was strongly excited, would, carried away unintentionally by a rapid impulse of thought, express generally the feelings of his mind in such a manner as to appear to have designedly aimed at poetical expression. We have an example of this in the speech of Moses, Deut. xxviii., in which while employed in describing more fully than formerly, chap. iv. 25—30, the calamities which would befall his countrymen should they revolt from their obedience to Jehovah, and at the same time dwelling at greater length on the prosperity promised as the accompaniment of their piety; he for the most part expresses himself not only more sublimely and eloquently than before, but even conforms himself to the poetic parallelism of sentences, and often rises quite to the poetical strain.

But in after times, in proportion as many causes tended to break down and diminish the noble poetical talent of the Hebrews, in the same proportion did

their poetry more and more decrease, till at last it altogether perished, and none, except a very few, remained, who with any success aimed at obtaining just celebrity in it. Then, indeed, a kind of parallelism began to be employed even in prose; of which custom some examples may be found in the writings of Daniel which do not deserve commendation from the excellence of their style, as for instance, in chap. ii. 20—23, and chap. v. 17—24; and with this sort of parallelism the Jews, during their Babylonish captivity, seem to have been so taken, as even to have inspired those to whose power they were subjected, with a love of it. Hence in consequence, not a few vestiges of it are to be found, particularly in the decree of the Babylonish king, Dan. iv.: unless we suppose that decree to have been composed by Daniel agreeably to the mind of the king by his command. Compare also chap. vi. 27, 28, and vii. 14. We are decidedly of opinion that hence it is, that occasionally in some of the apocryphal writings of the Old Testament, as 1 Maccab. i. 25—43; iii. 2—9; xiv. 4—15, but particularly in the books of Jesus the Son of Sirach, and of the Wisdom of Solomon, there is a certain parallelism of sentences caught at, in which a poor shadow of the Hebrew poetry appears. Neither should it seem surprising that the vivid genius of the Apostle Paul occasionally surrenders itself to the love of this parallelism.

Obs. 9. From what we have said, it follows that there are as it were certain boundary lines, by which poetry and prose were separated among the Hebrews, even from the most ancient times; and although the

latter occasionally borrowed something from the former, particularly after its decay and death, yet that historical poetry, such as some of the moderns speak of, is falsely ascribed to the ancient Hebrews.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE SIMPLE AND IMPERFECT MODES OF NARRATION OBSERVABLE IN THE HISTORICAL WRITINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

§ 1.

THE sort of style which appears in the historical writings of the Old Testament is for the most part simple; and this simplicity should be the more attended to by an interpreter, as it very frequently possesses a certain native beauty of narration conjoined with it.

Obs. 1. In general nothing is more simple, and more removed from every appearance of art, than the historical style of the Hebrews. Sometimes, indeed, particularly in their more ancient writings, it is highly figurative; as the more ancient the composition, the more usually is it figurative. Consult for example Gen. iii. 24; vii. 11; viii. 2. Sometimes too, the style seems to become more elevated in the description of the more important events, as in Exod. xix.

16. 2 Kings ii. 11. The speeches too of some persons related in the middle of the histories, in proportion as they were uttered with greater emotion and treated the subject with greater sublimity, in the same proportion are they in a style more suitable to the emotion of the speaker, or the sublimity of the subject. But, however, the simplicity of the historical style of the Hebrews is in all cases extremely great, and this, in the very passages that are more oruate and sublime, is so manifest, that in no instance does there appear even the very slightest shadow of any sort of art; neither can a comparison in any way be instituted between their historical style, and that more polished composition aimed at by the Greeks and Romans. Almost similar is the simplicity of the Arabian historians, particularly of the more ancient of them, who narrate events rather than describe them by the adhibition of art.

Obs. 2. This simplicity of the historical style of the Hebrews appears particularly from the fact, that from the first chapters of Genesis even to the conclusion of the latest historical writings of the Old Testament, the authors have employed no care or elegance of writing by which they might entice, arrest, and delight their readers. They add fact to fact, and discourse to discourse, in the continued series of their narration, just as the occasion seemed to require. They almost always pursued the humble and very inelegant form of annals. Rarely did they touch upon the causes of events, except when motives of religion supplied them; concerning the natural connexion of events when such there was, they neither curiously inquired, nor entered

into subtle disquisitions ; and they always coupled in the same manner those which were near to each other and those which were remote, those, in fine, which were in some way mutually connected, and those which had no connexion whatever. Neither did they take any pains in the nice selection of their words, or on the rythm of their sentences ; but wrote always just as men usually converse with one another, or as one relates events to others.

Obs. 3. But, however far the ancient Hebrew historical writers are, when we regard their manner of writing, from presenting any polished example of narrating history : yet in their very simplicity, exceedingly remote from every attempt at art, they have a merit, and that not of the meanest kind. There is confessedly a certain beauty, not the splendid progeny of polished art, but the modest daughter of ruder nature, and the most attached sister of ingenuous simplicity, to which the Hebrew writers may with the highest justice lay claim as belonging to them. It is not the least of Livy's merits, by which he stands pre-eminent among the Roman historians, that he has often described events in such vivid colours, as to recal them into action, and place them before the eyes of his readers : whose writings, indeed, whilst I peruse, I seem to myself oftentimes transported as it were into a magnificent theatre, where events are represented to the life, and am filled with admiration of the consummate art of this most celebrated writer, and of the rare felicity of his exquisitely cultivated genius. But when reading the Hebrew historians, who simply, and without art, following nature as their guide, relate

events as they happened, forgetful not unfrequently both of the writers and their far distant time and place, I seem to myself transported to the scene of the described events, and to see with my own eyes, and to hear with my own ears, what they relate as said and done. And it particularly deserves to be remarked, though near akin to what we have already said, that in these historical writings, although the natural appearance and distinguishing character as it were of some of the persons be not nicely nor studiously described, yet these discriminating traits are presented to the readers in action truly and clearly depicted, and are occasionally exhibited in the most secluded retirement of domestic life, so that we possess no historical books from which we can derive more means for fitting and enabling us thoroughly to know the different dispositions of mankind, and fully to perceive the baseness of the various vices as well as the excellence of virtue. Which particulars, the interpreter who shall properly handle, will, particularly in this age, and in more ways than one, be enabled to consult the dignity of the sacred books. Compare P. i. S. i. C. v. § 4. Obs. 2.

Obs. 4. It may be asked, what ought we to think regarding the speeches which we read in the historical writings of the Old Testament; whether they were in reality spoken as they are recorded, or not? In this inquiry, we only speak of those conversations respecting whose nature there exists no controversy in these latter times: consequently we do not take into account either the conversation of the first woman with the serpent, or of Balaam with the ass, nor any of the

things recorded as said by God or angels when introduced as speaking, which many interpreters of the present day assume as widely remote from historical truth. But we in this place refer only to those speeches or sayings, which have nothing in them removed from the common course of human things. It is well known that it was the custom of the Greek and Roman historians to ascribe speeches both to illustrious men and women, which they never uttered. Whatever judgment may be formed of the probable cause of this fiction, certainly no one will differ from us in this, that the more art is displayed in these fictitious speeches in proportion as they are more adapted to the genius of the speakers, times, and circumstances. But if now you compare the orations, speeches, conversations, and sayings of any of the persons which are recorded in the historical parts of the Old Testament, with those fictitious speeches of the ancient heathen historians which we have mentioned, it must be acknowledged that the former are preferable to the latter in this respect, that they are far more suitable to those to whom they are attributed, and seem more expressed according to the truth of nature. To take a few examples from one writer; let be read and diligently considered, the sayings of Goliath and David when going to attack him, 1 Sam. xvii. 42—47; the opposing counsels of Ahithophel and Hushai, 2 Sam. xvii. 1—14; the flattering address of Abigail, so admirably fitted to sooth the anger of David, 1 Sam. xxv. 23—35; and lastly, the exquisitely artful speech of the woman of Tekoah, 2 Sam. xiv. 4—20: in each of which, in regard not only to the substance, but also

the very expressions used, we can imagine nothing more apt, nor in any respect more completely suited to the occasion. How then does this happen? Is it from a greater art in fiction; as it is a proof of the highest art to conceal the art by surrounding it with the veil of nature? No indeed; for, as the ancient Hebrew historians were exceedingly removed from every kind of art, we hesitate not to affirm that men were not introduced by them speaking as their genius suggested, but as in reality they did speak: neither are those speeches to which we refer to be attributed to a pretended, and as it were assumed simplicity, but are detailed in their naked truth. Should then the interpreter of the historical writings of the Old Testament advert to this fact prudently and candidly, wherever a suitable opportunity occurs, then, indeed, though he should not display their native beauty to their honour, he will at least conduce not a little to exciting an intimate conviction of the very high authority due to them, and of their fidelity; both, things very necessary in the present age.—But whether God really spoke or not on all occasions, where in their most ancient historical writings he is introduced as speaking, belongs not to this part of the subject to inquire.

§ 2.

An interpreter ought also to attend to the more imperfect and altogether less elegant mode of narrating events in their order which in gen-

ral obtains in the historical writings of the Old Testament: a mode which was agreeable to the simplicity and inferior cultivation of the nation.

Obs. 1. As the Hebrew nation was far removed from the cultivation of polite literature, it did not possess historians distinguished by a narration elegant and well arranged as to the order of events, or by elegance of style: nor did the simplicity of this nation, particularly in the remote ages, altogether ignorant of the historical art, allow of these things. For although they eminently possess that native talent, by which they so represent to our view the actions, genius, and manners of men, and their modes of thinking and acting, that nothing can seem to be more adapted to beget in every candid mind, and in every lover of truth, the highest confidence in their fidelity; yet, however, in regard to this very admirable talent itself, it is not a little apparent how very deficient, imperfect, and inelegant it is, nay, even presenting somewhat of rudeness in its appearance. In any more cultivated nation, therefore, it would deserve to be called a degree of disgraceful negligence, but among the Hebrews it ought to be attributed to that artless simplicity similar to that of youths, who, possessed indeed of the best gifts of mind and genius, have not yet had them cultivated, polished, and brought to perfection by the aid of art and learning.

Obs. 2. As then the ancient historical writers of the Hebrews employed the form of annals, they in consequence were generally careful in marking the date at

which each event took place. They, however, often omitted this in the most remarkable events: as in certain circumstances of the history of David, of which the exact date is scarcely defined absolutely. Often too they narrate parts of histories not in the order of time, but as occasion required; as in what is related concerning Keturah, who as well as Sarah was married to Abraham, Gen. xxv. 1; and whom it is highly probable that he married, not after Sarah's death, as the course of the history seems to indicate, but while she was yet alive, and even by her advice, after the birth of Isaac: but the mention of this marriage is inserted where we find it, in recording the distinction, which, in the distribution of his property, Abraham made between the only son of his legitimate wife and the many others begotten on his concubines, *verses 2—6*. Besides, in the description of events, some things are not unfrequently omitted, either because at the time they were written they were considered less worthy of being noticed, or because they were fresh in men's memories, or sufficiently known from fuller histories: such, for instance, as is seen in the description of the temple built by Solomon, 1 Kings vi. and vii. Therefore it can scarcely happen that an interpreter will not frequently be at a loss in explaining every circumstance quite fully, or in arranging the exact order of the times of each; and, consequently, he will feel himself under the necessity, where he cannot attain to certainty, of being contented with what has the greatest appearance of probability. And, on the whole, as no one can, from the writings of the Old Testament, construct a full and complete history of the Hebrew na-

tion from its commencement down to the time of the restoration of their state after the captivity, so even a complete life, in which nothing memorable shall be wanting, of any of the most celebrated men in this history, such as Moses, Samuel, David, or Solomon, cannot be drawn up from these writings. The genius of that nation was not at all capable of writing such a perfect history, nor even of forming or adumbrating to itself the slightest sketch of such a thing, to which one might endeavour to conform himself. But, however, so far is the imperfect mode of narration which is found in the Old Testament historical writings from detracting from their dignity, that, on the contrary, it confirms and highly corroborates their authenticity and fidelity as of the greatest antiquity, and so much the more displays and nobly illustrates that simplicity the mark of truth impressed upon them, and that complete colouring from the life, which no art but nature alone has imprinted on them.

Obs. 7. We may here opportunely subjoin something regarding the singular mode sometimes adopted by the sacred historians, of inserting certain written documents in the middle of their histories in the place where they seemed suitable, and where they incorporated them in the very form in which they found them, without being at all solicitous to inform their readers of their so doing. For that they have acted thus, is justly concluded from sufficiently clear indications.— That the book of Genesis is made up of different writings of this sort, has long been observed, and sufficiently appears from the diversity of the style. In some of the other historical books of the Old Testament,

certain portions occur taken from another source.^a Of this class is the history of Balaam, Numb. xxi. 2. on to xxiv. 25, and, as it seems to us, the history of Samuel evoked by the female soothsayer, 1 Sam xxviii. 3, to the end: for this passage is inserted into the middle of the history of David, which is interrupted in the 2d verse of that chapter, and continued again in the xxixth, so that it may be justly supposed to have been there resumed as it was originally written. Lastly, we refer to this head some paragraphs in 1 Sam. xvii. which some think to be spurious, and of which we have already treated, P. ii. S. iv. § 4. obs. 3. Vol. ii. p. 46, &c. And this remarkable practice, to which it is not altogether useless to pay sedulous attention in the exercise of interpretation, clearly testifies both the simplicity of the writers who adopted it, as also the very great and religious fidelity with which they employed the best aids to their undertaking which were within their reach.

CHAPTER III.

THAT THE MYTHICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE
HISTORICAL WRITERS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
OUGHT NOT TO BE ADMITTED.

§ 1.

The mythical interpretation of the historical

^a *Orig.*—“Occurrunt partes quædam aliunde desumptæ.”

writings of the Old Testament is recently invented, and consists chiefly in this, that it assumes that many histories are enwrapped in a veil of fables, and are only partly true; and that some even contain nothing which really happened, but are certain philosophical conjectures concerning abstruse things and their causes, thrown into the historical form.

Obs. 1. Before we begin to treat of the mythical interpretation of the Old Testament, it will be necessary to say a few words respecting the word *mythus*, from which it has received its name. In its origin it is Greek; and *μυθος* clearly answers to the Latin word *fabula*. Both of these words came to be applied to short stories, partly [or wholly] fictitious, although originally they were almost always applied to express “a word in general use, and employed in common conversation.” But since the notion of fiction had begun to be implied in the word *fabula*, on this account principally most moderns have chosen rather to employ for their purpose the Greek word, by which they would signify what was in part at least true, although propounded under the appearance of fable.

Obs. 2. In vain shall we attempt to comprehend in one general definition what has been designated by the term *Mythus*, particularly by those of later times. We shall, therefore, deem it sufficient to pass in review the principal sorts of *Mythi*, consulting brevity as much as in our power.

Historical Mythi are those relations orally propagated, such as existed among the more cultivated nations before history was written : which in course of time were so adorned by tradition as that the truth of events was enveloped in a veil of fiction, which ought carefully to be stripped off.

Philosophical Mythi, or *Philosophemata* as they are otherwise called, are those very ancient opinions or doctrines devised by human genius regarding some abstruse subjects, presented in a historical form, that they might thus be better subjected, as it were, to the eyes of other men. Of this class are the fictitious descriptions of the state of the dead, and the fabulous narrations regarding the origin of the visible world and of human evils, which the inquiring industry of genius has devised.

Mixed Mythi are those which contain somewhat of both these sorts conjoined, so that they have under them a certain degree of historical truth, to which is added a sort of philosophical exposition of the event regarding its manner and causes, so devised, however, as if the philosophical fiction, if I may so speak, had really happened. To this is referred the fiction of the golden and subsequent ages, to which something preserved by tradition gave occasion ; but in which, at the same time, the effects of human genius early solicitous to investigate the nature and causes of things, is discernible. Nay, certain names given to events which happened, or to real persons, regarding the reason and cause of which curious inquiries were made, are thought to have afforded a handle for the invention of mixed mythi of this kind : so that the

very explaining of these names was, as it were, the parent of relations, which have an appearance of history, but which ought to be placed in the class of fictions.

Poetic mythi are, according to the moderns, both those mythi, of which we have already spoken, eagerly seized upon by the poets, and by them much amplified and adorned, and also certain fictions deriving their origin from the genius of the poets themselves, which are not, therefore, to be strictly explained according to the laws of historical truth and the nature of things.

Lastly, *Moral mythi* are certain doctrines having reference to the manners and common experience of life, which are comprehended in short fictitious stories, that they may make a greater impression on the minds of men. These are by the Greeks denominated *μυθοι* as their proper name; such are those attributed to Esop, Syntipas, and other authors. Among the Latins they bear the like name of *Fabulæ*.

Obs. 3. Although it seemed necessary, or at least useful, to give a brief account on the same occasion, and at the same time, of the principal sorts of mythi, as they are called, we do not deem it consistent with the subject now under consideration to have respect in what follows to any but those mythi alone, which regard the recently introduced mode of interpreting the writings of the Old Testament, in so far as they are to be accounted historical. We therefore put aside the poetic mythi, which may be more conveniently noticed in another place. We also omit the moral mythi, or, as they are otherwise denominated, para-

bles, such as those in Judges ix. 7—17. 2 Sam. xii. 1—7. 2 Kings xiv. 9, which no one doubts to be feigned histories; regarding the interpretation of which, as well as allegories, and comparing them with the object in view, we have already shewn what ought principally to be attended to, in P. ii. S. ii. § 5, obs. 7. Neither shall we touch upon the books of Job or Jonah, both of which have the form of a larger sort of parable.—*Compare* C. i. § 2, obs. 1. Nay, it does not belong to this part of our subject to speak of those popular fictions dignified with the title of philosophical mythi, or philosophemata, such as the fabulous description of the region which contains all the dead; of explaining which from the simplicity of the first ages, we have already said something, P. ii. S. iii. § 3, obs. 3. The other mythi are more nearly connected with the nature of our present subject; as to which, let us now see what the new mode of interpreting the Old Testament would teach us.

Obs. 4. There are then, according to the new mode of interpretation of which we are treating, a great many historical mythi in the Old Testament; there are also some philosophical; and lastly, some composed of both kinds mixed.

To the historical mythi are referred the frequent apparitions of God and of angels in the histories comprehended in the volume of the Old Testament; Abraham's singular sacrifice; the calling of Moses the deliverer of the Israelites, and some things connected with that event; the giving of the law at Mount Sinai; the passage of the Jordan under Joshua; a great many things in the history of Elijah and Elisha

which are scarcely credible, and many more things of the same sort : which indeed may contain historic truth, but adorned and obscured by fictions, and the splendid pretence of miracles, from which it must be freed, so as that it may be shewn in its simple form, and the credibility of the event not rendered any longer doubtful.

In the number of philosophical mythi are reckoned both the description of the formation of the earth, and likewise the history of the fall of man into sin ; so that each of these is nothing else than an effort of genius to investigate the abtruse origin of the visible creation, and of vice and evils, so as to bring these in some degree out of darkness into light, and render them more easily understood.

The last sort of mythi belonging to this subject are those called mixed. Of this class the Noachic deluge is held to be ; partly true, although distorted by the addition of fictions, partly hypothetical or dependent on opinion, in so far as a short ingenious story of an early age attempts to shew the causes of an event which really happened, under the appearance and form of history. And to this head may be referred the mythus regarding the confusion of languages at Babel, which, in part at least, is founded on etymology, Gen. xi. 1—9. Some real event is supposed to have taken place, the knowledge of which was derived from tradition, but the confusion of languages is to be held as a mere fiction of an imagination speculating about the name of the city בבל, which signifies *confusion*, and the cause of its being so called.

Obs. 5. This is the simplest and most generally received view regarding the mythi, their nature and diversity, in the historical writings of the sacred volume, among the patrons of the new mode of interpretation of which we are treating. There are some who have gone much farther, and consider every thing contained in the most ancient writings of the Old Testament to be altogether fictitious. Therefore, the ancient history of the Hebrews, as well as of the other ancient nations, is held to be a philosophical mythus, in which there is not the least truth, and to be explained in the same way as the mythology of the Indians, after the model of which it is formed; or at least the whole of the Pentateuch is accounted by them a mythical fiction, or a theocratic *Epos*, whose author formed the history, in which he wished to celebrate the origin of the nation sacred to God, partly from his own imagination, and partly from uncertain traditions which he accommodated to his purpose.^a But neither of these opinions have seemed to gain almost any applause: and by far the greater part think that a true history is contained even in the most ancient books of the Old Testament, involved, however, in many mythi, and enlarged with some philosophemata—but in bringing these back to the simplicity of history, and in defining and explaining them, it is far from being the case that all follow the same course. At first this mythical in-

^a J. A. Kanne, in a work entitled “*Erste Urkunden der Geschichte, oder allgemeine mythologie, Baireuth, 1803, 2 vols.*” is the author of the first of these opinions: and W. M. L. De Wette, in his “*Criticism on the Israelitic History,*” published at Halle, 1807, P. I., is the author of the second.

terpretation was applied only to the most ancient writings of the Old Testament, but by degrees it began to be extended to the whole of them, without distinction of age, from their observing that the same mode of narration was common to them all; nay, even at last it was applied to the historical books of the New Testament itself. But it must be allowed that even at present there are some who do not wish its application to be extended farther than to the historical writings of the Old Testament that are of the greatest antiquity.

§ 2.

That comparison with other ancient nations, who all had their mythical periods, which has been instituted for the purpose of supporting the mythical interpretation of the Old Testament, when closely considered, does not carry along with it that degree of probability, and is very far from having in it such force, as has been confidently attributed to it.

Obs. 1. It is usual with those who are desirous of recommending by every means the mythical interpretation of which we are speaking, to derive a great and invincible argument, and to be convinced that they have found one for it, by instituting a comparison between the Hebrew nation and some of the other nations of antiquity. For if among these last, the my-

thical manner of writing prevailed before history began to be composed, why should not the same thing be supposed to have taken place among the former people? And since among the other ancient nations a great number of traditions and short narratives orally propagated, in progress of time assumed a wonderful and portentous guise; since some freaks of genius regarding names gave rise to fabulous histories, in which an explanation of their cause was attempted; since certain attempts of industrious investigation regarding the origin and nature of things of the more obscure sort, assuming the garb of true history, placed the framed theories as it were before men's eyes: in one word, since the other ancient nations had their mythical periods, is it consistent with reason to except the Hebrews alone, and to pronounce them wholly exempt from what was common to ancient nations? What in addition supplies a great and illustrious weight of authority, as they think, is the distinct affirmation of Varro, quoted by *Censorinus De die natali*, Cap. 21,^a that there are three different ages; the first the *αδηλον*, in which it is not known what happened; the second the *μυθικον*, regarding which many fabulous things are related; and the third the *ιστορικον*, which begins from the first Olympiad, and in which real events are recorded in true histories: this, therefore, which took place among other nations, may also be justly averred to have had place among the Hebrews.

Obs. 2. These arguments have certainly some speciousness, if looked at generally, and from a distance;

^a Varronis Opera, T. i. p. 369, 370, of the Biponti edition.

but the nearer and more particularly that they are considered and cautiously pondered, the more does this speciousness and magnificent appearance of probability, with which they are got up, disappear: which, as far as consistent with the narrow limits to which we are confined, it will be worth while to put in a clear point of view.

Obs. 3. To begin then with that which we have last mentioned—we have no wish to detract from the authority and force of Varro's testimony, provided it be understood and explained agreeably to his meaning. Varro is here manifestly speaking only of the Grecian ages, regarding which, who ever doubted that he speaks conformably to what really took place? And should he be held to have ascribed a somewhat similar distinction of ages to other nations, he must be supposed only to have had respect to some of those more distinguished nations, of which the Grecian historians have given accounts. But what application has this to the Hebrew nation, that obscure and almost unknown people, or who were scarcely worthy of being inquired after by the polished geniuses of Greece?

Obs. 4. The force of the comparison derived from some of the ancient nations may seem of more importance; and since they had their mythic ages before history was consigned to writing, it is reasonable to suppose that these likewise are to be found among the Hebrews. We do not, however, conceive this argument to be of such a nature as to place it beyond the reach of objection. We readily concede that the things which happened among the ancient heathen nations were comprehended in certain tradi-

tions, and were not in the early times of these nations committed to writing : but that all of these, without distinction, had a similar mythic appearance, distinguished by apparitions of the deity and fictions full of miracles, such as is held to have taken place among the Hebrews, we by no means allow. This was the case among the Greeks, which was principally owing to their having poets, who rendered celebrated their oral traditions, by propagating them in their poems ; and who endeavoured in various ways greatly to adorn them, long before there were writers of history. But did the same thing really happen to all the other nations of antiquity as to the Greeks, who were highly ennobled by their love and cultivation of poetry, and given to delight in suprising fables ? Let us here look at the case of the Arabians only, who, as we know, were inclined to an ardent love of poetry as far back as we have any accounts of them, and by no means disinclined to an attachment to fables, and, besides, nearly connected with the ancient Hebrews in their origin, language, and genius. They are possessed of some very ancient traditions regarding the affairs of their nation, partly written in successive ages, in which you will in vain seek for this mythic appearance. Nay, even they have poems whose authors have been desirous of rescuing from oblivion their own actions, or those of their tribes which seemed most worthy of being recorded, in which, however, the same appearance of miracle exists not which is seen in the poems of Homer or of the other Greek poets.—But with regard to the Hebrews themselves, what took place among the Greeks is very different from what took place

among them. For their poets did not assume their affairs as the subject of their poems, enveloping them in mythical fictions before history, the announcer of truth, existed. But they have historical writings, in which events are brought down from the first origin of their race, nay, from a much more remote period : unless we choose to designate some parts of these, particularly the more ancient, by the name of historical poetry, and how widely remote this is from probability we have already seen in chap. 1 ; or wish to transform the Mosaic books, in which the origin of their race, their formation into a state, their laws and public constitutions, and the beginnings of the human race itself are recorded, into a sort of mythic Epos ; than which imagination, I know not whether any thing more absurd, or more unworthy of refutation, was ever devised.

Obs. 5. These historical writings of the ancient Hebrews, inasmuch as they extend to the most remote antiquity in their accounts, exhibit no trifling distinctive character in this respect between this nation and all other nations, particularly the Greeks, viz. that this nation has not *αδηλα* ages, of which it has no records. Their accounts are, indeed, generally more brief the more ancient the times which they describe ; neither do they contain of them all a full, but, on the contrary, a very imperfect history. But this is common to them with the other historical writers of the Old Testament : and we have already stated in the former chap. § 2, what opinion ought to be held with regard to this circumstance. Being, however, quite conformable to the greater antiquity and simplicity of the

times, it adds no little weight to the evidence of their faithfulness. Whatever may be the quality, however, of these accounts of the more ancient ages, they are at any rate so composed as to afford a light, and that not a small one, in the thick darkness of the most ancient times. For if we consult any of the other ancient nations, we find nothing, even among those most cultivated, and celebrated for their studious investigation of human affairs, from which we can delineate any account of the human race down from its first origin. But when these altogether fail us, we find among the Hebrew people alone, although the least cultivated, such records as make us not altogether to wander in uncertainty in the darkness of the first ages: and it is highly worthy of notice in the historical writings of the Old Testament, in which the whole human race is referred to one common stock, that in them alone, not, however, through design, or with any art, but introduced in the most simple manner, is related the beginning of the principal nations, the origin and progress of the arts, and the slow advancement of the human intellect, in such a manner that nothing can seem more probable in itself, nor any thing even be imagined more consonant to the nature of things and of man in remote antiquity.

Obs. 6. There is another, and that too a very remarkable distinction, between the Hebrews and those other nations with which they are compared, that among these last the mythic period ended when history began to be written, while with the former the mythic age can scarcely be reckoned ever to have ceased. There are, indeed, as we have said, § 1. obs.

5, near the end, some persons at the present day who hold that *mythi* are only to be found in the most ancient historical writings of the Old Testament: but we are of opinion that those are much more consistent, who seek for *mythi* in the historical writings of the Old Testament of every age, in which is presented that sort of extraordinary events which are assumed as marking mythical history. For if the apparitions of God and angels related in the book of Genesis are to be accounted *mythi*; why should not those be so also, which are related in the other books, and in those of a much later age? But it appears, that at the time when the more extended annals of the kings of Judah and of Israel were written for the Hebrews, which are occasionally quoted as undoubtedly sufficient for confirming the truth of the abbreviated narrations; at this very time, many circumstances not in any degree less extraordinary are to be found, than those which appear in the more ancient writings, and which therefore present that phenomenon which is denominated *mythic*. Shall we, therefore, say that among the Hebrews alone it happened, that the *mythic* period did not cease even after history was written? And is it to be held that it only then ceased when the nation returned to the country of their fathers from the Babylonish captivity? For it is said, that in the historical writings of Ezra and Nehemiah no mythical appearance presents itself. But, as we may be permitted briefly to observe, although the observation is not strictly connected with the present work, the manner of narration in the historical writings of the New Testament also composed by Jews is such, that in reading them we may often-

times find ourselves carried back as it were to the most ancient mythic period : therefore we are not at all surprised that no small number of mythi are produced from these writings also. But yet we are surprised, that between the Hebrew and other nations a comparison is instituted on the ground of attributing the same mythic periods to the one and the others : whilst in the comparison of what is exceedingly different, and in part directly opposed, we find a great deficiency in the due strength of argument. We, therefore, consider ourselves fully entitled to deny that either historical, philosophical, or etymological mythi, are to be ascribed to the Hebrew nation, because they must be ascribed to other ancient nations.

Obs. 7. As the same mythic system, which, from a comparison instituted with other nations, is attributed to the Hebrews, must, from the perfectly similar mode of narration which strikes every one, be reckoned common to almost all the historical writings of the Sacred code, we cannot, indeed, see how, with any degree of probability, its cause can be in every case derived from the nature and age of traditions propagated only by word of mouth, which often induced a marvellous form and appearance on historical events. For were this observable in the more ancient writings only, those with whom we are arguing would have a great ground of boasting. But since, even in their own judgment, the same system is followed by the Hebrews, after history began to be written by public authority ; nay, even since it may be elicited from the historical writings of the New Testament themselves, whose authors either saw a

great part of those things which they relate with their own eyes, or derived them from the best and purest authorities : thence we conclude that this sort of history, full of miracles, which is called mythical, must be derived from other causes, and that, both in the more ancient as well as in the more recent writings, which are exceedingly similar in their manner of narration, being clothed in the most simple and unsophisticated garb of truth, are not contained vague, uncertain, and fabulous traditions, but historical relations most worthy of the highest credit. Compare what we have said above, P. i. S. i. c. v. § 4. obs. 3—7.

§ 3.

The weight of argument is somewhat greater which is derived from the similitude of many of the historical relations of the Old Testament and those of other nations ; but not such as to render the mythical interpretation of the former altogether approvable.

Obs. 2. The very great similitude between many of the relations which occur mostly in some of the historical writings of the Old Testament, and those mythical fables which are found among other nations, is generally very strongly urged ; which, indeed, cannot be denied, and consequently a similar mode of interpretation would seem to be required. For who, in the cosmogonies of the Greeks, Romans, and other na-

tions, does not readily acknowledge certain efforts of human genius, attempting the investigation of the origin of the visible universe? Is it proper then to wish that the Hebrew cosmogony alone should be considered as historical truth?—That the evils which press upon men arose from the rashly opened box of Pandora, is allowed by all to be a mere fiction: why then should not the Mosaic narration of man being miserable from his own fault be so too; as though framed in another mode, yet it equally smells of a mythus, in which the cause of human evils is explained?—That the flood of Deucalion happened in reality as related in the fable, no one will easily persuade himself: is it then reasonable to imagine that an altogether true history is contained in the very ancient description of the flood of Noah?—And if similar words *λααs* a stone, and *λαοs* a people, seem to have given rise to the ingenious mythus regarding the procreation of men anew after the great inundation of the waters, by the throwing of stones by Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha:^a why may not, with much probability, the singular relation of the confusion of language at Babel be de-

^a So says Heyne in his edition of APOLLODORI, *Bibliothec.* I. 7. 2. p. 95.—[The reference here is wrong, as what is said by Heyne, (at least in the Gottingen edition of 1803), is to be found in his observations on the place noted, in the 2d volume, p. 38. In the way the reference is made by Pareau, it would appear as if Heyne himself was the authority for this etymological fiction: but he directly refers to Pindar, Ol. ix. 64—71, and his Scholiast.—The observation of the Scholiast is on l. 68. Οἱ γὰρ (Deucalion and Pyrrha) πεμπομενοι εἰς τὰ σπιθεν λιθοὶ παρ' αὐτῶν ἀνθρώποισι ἐγίνοντο. διὰ τὸ καὶ λαοὶ οἱ οὐχλοὶ, ἀπο τῆς λααs.—*Translator.*]

rived from the name בבל itself, which signifies *confusion*, and from its etymological interpretation?—There is no one who does not place the battles of Homer's gods and men in the list of fables, and shall, then, the incredible history of Jacob wrestling with God be accounted true?—What again are more like to each other than the story of Niobe changed into a stone, and Lot's wife into a pillar of salt? Who, moreover, when he thinks of Balaam's ass brought in as speaking, does not immediately call to mind the horse of Achilles (*Iliad*, xix. 404) speaking? Lastly, not to mention any more mythical fictions of the Hebrews, and nations foreign to them, not altogether unlike in their appearance to each other: as often in profane antiquity, and in Homer particularly, as the gods are said to have appeared, there is no one but must confess without the least hesitation that these appearances must be ranked among the *mythi*, therefore, if one desires to be consistent, he must necessarily account as *mythi* the frequent apparitions of God and angels related in the Old Testament.

Obs. 2. The better to shew that this defence of the mythical interpretation of the Old Testament has not that force ascribed to it, we remark in general, and in the first place, that by far the most of those foreign *mythi*, which, forsooth, are like to the Hebrew narrations, are to be found in their poets, particularly in Homer; and with these are compared the events which are found related in the historical writings of the Old Testament. But there is in this comparison something incongruous and greatly dissimilar on both sides; for historians should have been compared

only with historians, and poets with poets. That this unequal and unjust mode of proceeding might be in some degree moderated and corrected, the invention, indeed, of historical poetry to be attributed to the Hebrews was laid hold upon, but with how little probability we have already seen, C. i. § 2. obs. 3—7. Nor must we pass over that singular dissimilitude in this boasted likeness between the mythi produced from both these quarters; that in the employment of them the Hebrew poets are much more sparing than the Greek or Latin. The Hebrew poets possessed in a high degree great creative powers, and yielded in no respect, nay, even far excelled these other bards in power of fiction, and in luxuriancy and boldness of genius: but yet while they much delighted in fictions of another sort, of which we shall afterwards treat, they almost altogether abstained from those mythi of which we are now speaking. They did not transform the founders of their nation, or even their legislator Moses himself, into semi-deities or sons of God; they feigned not to themselves for poetic description all sorts of monstrous portents given out as signs of approaching deliverance to the people, nor metamorphoses, nor, in fine, any of those incredible things to be found in profane poetic mythology; nor did they lay hold on anecdotes or fallacious traditions of events, of which known history said nothing; but if they celebrated in their poems any particularly memorable transactions, they represented them no otherwise in their poetic dress than they had been described in the historical relation of them; and even in the theme itself

of the origin of the visible universe, how much soever adapted to the oriental love of fiction, they handled the subject in such a manner in their poems, as in no respect to detract from the simplicity of the Mosaic description.

Obs. 3. No less remarkable is the distinction, in the great similitude attempted to be established between the Hebrew and Profane mythi, arising from this, that the latter are conjoined with the worship of many gods, while the former are quite independent and free from that superstition. In the mythology of all other nations, and particularly of the Greeks and Romans, the gods and their different ranks hold so distinguished a place, that if you take them away, you withdraw, as it were, the principal foundation of the whole mythological edifice: of which foundation, since the Hebrew mythology is altogether destitute, should a mythology not be considered as ascribed to the Hebrews without any degree of probability, it is certainly at least so unlike to that of the heathens, as that by this very great dissimilitude the strength of the argument derived from the objected similitude of certain mythi is much weakened.

Obs. 4. But you will say, this want of similitude between the two mythologies arises from the unlikeness of the religions themselves; but this by no means hinders that what is equally mythical in both cases should be esteemed to be such, merely because men may have represented it in a different garb, accommodated to their different opinions regarding religion. Why then, since wherever the vulgar in ancient times believed that there were many gods, they often

produced them as it were upon the stage, which pious custom of ancient men the poets seized upon, so as often to say that the gods appeared in a visible shape—why, in like manner, should not the Hebrews, whom their public established religion taught to believe in only one God, feign that he himself occasionally appeared and spoke, or did so by his servants, whom they called angels? But in our turn we ask, whether, since it must without hesitation be determined that those apparitions of the heathen gods, beings such as no man of sane mind could bring himself to believe ever existed in the nature of things, were fabulous, does it then follow that the apparitions of the one true God, related in the Sacred Code, were likewise fabulous? How different are even the angels, such as they occasionally appear in the sacred history, from the inferior gods in the Greek and Roman mythology? Or shall we affirm that they at least are fictitious persons, when we cannot deny that man is not the alone being in the immense universe endowed with reason? Is it not in itself highly probable, that there are different species of those beings, whom the author of the whole creation has endowed with intelligence? Why should there not exist beings, much superior in intelligence to us who are placed upon this earth? Nay, why should we not think that there are beings, who, whilst they hold the highest rank among created existences, and occupy the first degree, as it were, of dignity with the supreme Lord and Governor of all things, are, in consequence, his chief servants, whom he may employ in an extraordinary manner when he may judge it

proper? Finally, however, we do not deny that God and the angels are sometimes introduced by the Hebrew poets; and we shall, in another place, consider how they employed this fiction for the purpose they had in view: but we are not here speaking of the Hebrew poets, but of their historical writers, between whom and the poets of heathen antiquity it is not necessary for us again to prove that an unfair comparison has been instituted. Those apparitions, then, of God and the angels, which are narrated in even the most ancient of the historical writings of the Old Testament, are, for the most part, so connected with the events themselves on occasion of which they are related, that they do not appear as a patch sewed to and added extrinsically through fiction, but belong to the simple, true, and natural dress, as it were of the events. They are adapted quite to the usages and nature of the men and the times, and are not without an important and wise design. In fine, they are joined by an indissoluble and natural bond with the whole of the extraordinary intervention of God, which we have represented in the sacred volume: which, not a few of the more recent interpreters wishing to exclude, have therefore determined that it is undoubtedly to be reckoned a mythus wherever God or the angels are introduced as having appeared or spoken,—a conclusion which no interpreter, who is not a little *too liberal*, will find himself obliged to adopt.

Obs. 5. We could, indeed, add much more to the observations already made, were we to subject to a strict examination the resemblances of such mythi as

have been adduced from both sources. But as this would detain us much too long, omitting some mythi, an opportunity of discussing which will subsequently occur, we judge it sufficient for our purpose here to pass in review some of those more remarkable mythi which they denominate philosophic; and which existed equally among the Hebrews and the other nations so similar to each other, that it becomes necessary to derive them either from some source common to both, or to ascribe them to human genius early employing itself on the nature and causes of things.

Hence, then, the Mosaic cosmogony as it is called, suggests itself immediately to our contemplation; which they compare with other cosmogonies, the mere fictions of human genius, in order that they may be able to place it equally with these last in the list of philosophic fables. But whatever may be determined regarding the time and manner in which these sprung up, it cannot, certainly, be denied that the Mosaic is in many respects superior. For it has so great simplicity, and at the same time such elegance and majesty, that no other is at all comparable to it. It sets before us all things in a just and admirable order, and places them almost before our eyes; and, whilst it brings in God acting in the similitude of a workman, it, at the same time, exhibits his infinite power together with his supreme wisdom and goodness so clearly, as to be admirably adapted for exciting the deepest feelings of the divine incomprehensible greatness, and that too in a manner likely to be productive of the most beneficial effects. And

whilst it is much superior by its own innate dignity to all the other cosmogonies with which it is compared, it is, at the same time, by far the most ancient. The Sabbath, appointed to be observed by the law-giver from Mount Sinai, shews it to have been already known and received by the Hebrews ; and upon it is built the Mosaic institution of every seventh day as a Sabbath, and of the Sabbatical new moon and year. If, then, it be nothing else but a philosophic mythus, it is certainly a remarkable prodigy of philosophic genius, of which no one can give any probable explanation, in what way it could have come into existence in such remote antiquity, and among a people by no means celebrated for their philosophic powers.

We may also make some remarks on the Mosaic relation of the fall of man into sin and certain evils, which has been sufficiently foolishly compared with the well-known fable of Pandora ; but which is of such a nature, as that, in all ancient mythology, nothing in the least degree similar to it is to be found. For, in whatever way the wonderful conference between the woman and the serpent may be explained, there is something in the divine command so altogether accommodated to the education of the first man, in being forbidden to eat of the fruit of a certain tree ; there is something in the description of the woman enticed step by step to violate the command and afterwards enticing her husband ; there is something in the described feeling of guilt, and the endeavour to escape from God ; there is, in fine, a something in this whole relation so adapted and agreeable to nature in every respect, that if it be a mere philosophic fic-

tion, it can scarcely be conceived how, among the Hebrews alone, in so early an age, a mythus altogether so incomparable should have been invented, and which, in its own species of fiction, so closely approaches to the nature of things, the infant state of the human race, and historical truth.

Lastly, that etymological subtlety applied to the profane mythi, and seemingly recommended under the title of philosophic fiction, if it can ever be supposed to have had the effect, among other nations, of generating mythi in any instance, without doubt can scarcely have done so among the Hebrews, when we reflect upon what was their constant custom. For, in every age, it was customary among the Hebrews to derive names from events, the memory of which they might, by their signification, propagate to posterity and render perennial. And, as this custom, from its very nature, breathes the greatest simplicity, such as existed in the primordial state of the human race, and, in consequence, seems to have remained in the nation long the preserver, in many other cases, of that primeval simplicity: it is quite improper to seek for any other cause of the name imposed on *Babel*, except that assigned in express words in Genesis xi. 9. Neither is the assumption in itself probable, that the name principally gave rise to the fictitious history; since rather, according to the custom of remote antiquity, a custom, too, constantly observed in succeeding ages, the name itself must have had some preceding historical cause.

§ 4.

Some aid in defending the mythical interpretation, of which we are speaking, may be sought for in the genius of the Hebrews, as well as of the other Orientals, being prone to exaggerating and adorning in a remarkable manner real events. Neither, however, is this argument, though not devoid of speciousness, in reality of such a nature as to leave us without grounds on which to refute it.

Obs. 1. That the genius of the Orientals is universally and vehemently addicted to exaggerate in relating all sorts of things, and to adorn them in various ways; nay, that the East is most fruitful in fables and other fictions, altogether repugnant to the nature of things, who is it that does not know? Why, therefore, should we not consider this to be the principal and almost sole cause of the mythical system, which, at all times, and after history began to be written, presents itself to us among the Hebrews, whose genius and propensities were similar to those of the other Orientals? And, indeed, it appears that the Hebrews of later times have been exceedingly laborious and singularly industrious in augmenting the prodigies contained in their sacred volume, and even in feigning new ones; as, therefore, in this they have shewn the genius derived from their ancestors pertinaciously adhering to them,

there is no difficulty in understanding whence that miraculous dress with which the most simple historical events appear clothed has been derived. We confess that these arguments are of such a nature as to seem capable of affording a ground of recommending the mythical interpretation of the Old Testament, such as the boasted but much less apt comparison of analogous mythi of other nations could not supply. For whatever of a mythical nature is determined to be in the historical writings of the Old Testament, and in those also of the New Testament, the whole of this may be easily derived solely from this disposition so addicted to fables, as from a perennial source. Wherefore we think it will be worth our while to show, as far as our prescribed brevity will allow, how very slight the defence is.

Obs. 2. We do not at all intend to deny that the Orientals are excessively prone to adorn, nay even to exaggerate things, and to devise incredible and prodigious fictions. But as this is supposed to be particularly observable in the Arabians, we shall therefore have respect solely to them, as allied to the Hebrews in origin, language, and disposition. That love, then, of an hyperbolical style, ornate even to turgidity, which is justly reprehended in them, has no relation to the mythical manner found among the Hebrews; and, besides, is not of great antiquity. In every age indeed they were fond of imagery, such as would add to every thing as it were life and spirit: but that too great luxuriancy of genius, such as appears in the most of their later poets, and even

some of their historical writers, has come to them from the contagion of some other Asiatic nations : and the older their historians are, so much the more simple and almost meagre is their style, while the more ancient of the Arabian poets themselves, however ornate and daring, are often more free from the fault of turgid exaggeration. But if the Arabians of the present day are delighted with marvellous stories, even the vulgar do not hold them for true histories, and their love for these should be considered as derived from India and Persia, both much addicted to fables. Nearer to the mythical manner, as it is called, approach some traditions concerning Mahomet, which were written after his time, and are full of prodigies.^a But a superstitious veneration of their prophet led them by these to endeavour to compensate for the power of miracles, which he himself had declared was denied to him,—CORAN, ii. 112. (119) and in other places. Such fabulous fictions, however, of a foolish superstition, not at all peculiar or confined to Mahometans, but common to almost all nations, and even adopted by not a few Christians, do by no means demonstrate that the genius of the Arabians was strongly inclined, from even the most ancient times, to that mythical mode of narration which the most of the historical writings of the Old Testament are supposed to exhibit.

Obs. 3. Let us now return to the Hebrews. No one can more fully grant than I do, that their genius

^a See particularly ADULF. *Annal. Moslem.* Vol. i. p. 104—108.

has been vehemently prone to the most despicable trifling about these prodigies; but the question is, whether in every age it was so, and that from this flowed that mythical appearance in the historical writings of the Old Testament of which we are speaking; a thing which it is far from possible to evince. This propensity arose by degrees sometime after the Babylonish captivity and the return of the Jews to their country, and was first generated among some of them at the time when their minds, having been altogether turned to the religion they had before despised, began to glide into superstition. Afterwards it received no little increase from the minute industry of the Pharisees, and their intense study of their traditions: until at last, after the destruction of their state by the Romans, there was nothing so absurd that was not sedulously snatched at, which would exaggerate in the most monstrous manner the excellency of their former condition, and gratify the insane pride of their miserable race. Thus those marvellously fabulous fictions which occur in some of the apocryphal writings of the Old Testament, and occasionally in Flavius Josephus, are quite nothing when compared with those which in a later age were hatched and absurdly framed by the puerile and trifling genius of the Rabbis. But if we look to those more ancient times which preceded the destruction of their first state, we indeed observe a great degree of a perverse superstitious disposition, in which the Hebrews of all ages have been exceedingly alike: but it was mostly a proneness to foreign superstitions, to which they were carried

with a blind impetuosity of desire : nor did the love of their own religion, if at any time excited, prevail to the degree of leading them to endeavour to add, even by the aid of fiction, any honour to that religion.

Obs. 4. The more clearly to shew that the genius of the Hebrews was not, at all times, such as in latter times it shewed itself to be, prone to augment and exaggerate things by fabulous inventions, let us go on to produce some clear examples from those times in which the Jews were inflamed with the love of the religion of their fathers, and in which, if a universal propensity to the mythical style had existed in them, they might have easily found matter to lay hold on and set forth in a miraculous dress. If, then, any time can be accounted fit, and suited in a particular manner to excite vehemently a propensity of this kind, it certainly was that, when Cyrus king of the Persians granted to them, as exiles, the much wished for power of re-establishing their government and of rebuilding their temple in their native country ; than which any thing more agreeable could not have happened to men so deeply affected as they shew themselves, in the cii. and cxxxvii. Psalms, to have been: yet no apparitions of God or angels are narrated, for the feigning of which this very singular and acceptable change of their affairs, ascribable solely to the divine will, was particularly favourable, and nothing even of a supernatural kind appears in the Psalms, such as the cxxivth and the cxxvi., composed at the time. But, indeed, if we assume that the genius of the Hebrews was always prone to mythical fictions, what, we ask,

was the cause that in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, pertaining to that period of their scarcely reinstated government; when the love of their religion and their country was receiving from time to time both new aliment and incurring obstructions, not even the slightest appearance of mythus shews itself? Again, if we turn to the book of Esther, in which the imminent danger of utter destruction to the Jews who had remained in the Persian provinces, happily indeed averted, is narrated: it is altogether particularly remarkable, that no mythus can be produced from the subject of a book so well adapted to move, in the highest degree, the feelings of the Jews, and that book, too, composed in Persia, so devoted to fables. Lastly, we judge it worthy of remark, that in the first book of Maccabees nothing at all presents itself which bears any appearance of supernatural fiction. Yet this book was written somewhat after the events related in it, compare c. ix. 22; xiii. 30; xvi. 23, 24; and has for its author a Jew, an inhabitant of Palestine, whose disposition, mode of thinking, and lofty feelings of religion it every where breathes: and although, in most cases, it preserves a simple and unadorned style, yet occasionally in description it is studiously dressed up, and raised even almost to the degree of poetic exaggeration, as in c. i. 25, 28, 39, 40; iii. 1—9; xiv. 4—15. It is also employed on a subject highly fitted for exciting the feelings in various ways, containing as it does the account of a people cruelly oppressed, but struggling against this with the noblest boldness and constancy, and at last victorious. In fine, it relates

to a time when the veneration for the religion of their fathers had already, among the Jewish common people, degenerated into such a degree of superstition as that they suffered themselves to be butchered on the Sabbath days, on which their ordinary labours had been prohibited, thinking it unlawful to defend themselves, c. ii. 35—38. In this book, however, nothing is anywhere related to have happened having the semblance of a divine miraculous interference, not even when, for the purpose of raising their spirits, some of the miracles of ancient times were called to their recollection, c. ii. 49—68 ; vii. 40—49. Nay, it is not groundlessly concluded from c. iv. 46, and xiv. 41, that it had long been considered as a settled point by all of them, that prophets were not now to be found to whom God revealed himself in an extraordinary manner : and how generally and certainly this was at that time credited appears from a hymn, (Psalm lxxiv. 9), which ought to be referred to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, in which the Jews complain that both prophets and miracles, by which God had formerly clearly demonstrated his intervention, had now failed. But, as there were Jews who could so little bear this defect of those times, as that they endeavoured to supply it by the inventions of their own imaginations ; hence sprung those different sorts of fictions, whose very absurdity often sufficiently proves the impurity of the fountains whence they flowed : and such as these are to be found in the second and third books of Maccabees. See, for instance, 2 Maccab. ii. 24—30 ; v. 1—4 ; xv. 11—16, and 3 Maccab.

vi. 16—22. And the contagion of this fault, in the highest degree pleasing to trifling and frivolous minds, in progress of time acquired greater strength among the Jews, until, at length, after the destruction by the Romans of the most sacred seat of their worship and of their state itself, it prevailed so much that one can scarcely say, whether the ravings of the insane Rabbinical superstitions deserve most to be laughed at or commiserated.

Obs. 5. Although these observations might suffice for our purpose, I chuse, however, to add a few things for the farther confirmation of what we have said, and which have a reference to the genius of the more ancient Hebrews. It was, indeed, universally of the most vivid nature, and caught at whatever would represent things to the senses. Hence, they often adorned and exhibited them under certain similitudes, nay, occasionally exaggerated, in order the more to excite other men: and yet by no means shewed themselves prone, either in common conversation or in the relation of events, to devising fabulous miracles. The historical books of the Hebrews are full of conversations between persons, in which events which had happened are related, but which do not shew, in the slightest degree, any accustomed or general attachment to fiction. Nothing, even of a miraculous nature appears in a most ancient moral fable, framed for the purpose of representing a certain matter to the senses, *Judg. ix. 8—15*: and although it appears from the speech of Hushai to the rebellious Absalom, *2 Sam. xvii. 7—13*, what power the Hebrews possessed of exaggeration, yet the men

sent by Moses to explore the country of Canaan, who, in relating what they had seen, were by no means free from all exaggeration, Numb. xiii. 25—33; Deut. i. 28, feigned nothing of an unheard of nature, such as their terror struck minds, or their design of deterring their credulous countrymen, might have easily suggested. Nay, not even their poets, though giving reins to a genius of the most daring nature, eager to augment and adorn their subject, can be said to have fallen into that propensity to miraculous fictions, which became almost general among the Hebrews of later times. It therefore justly seems to me exceedingly singular and most difficult to be conceived, that such an almost continual propensity of this nature should appear among the historical writers alone, so extremely remarkable for their ingenuous and native simplicity, as that, in whatever age they lived, they should be thought to have run after mythi and prodigies, for the purpose forsooth of giving to their narrations a divine force and excellence.

§ 5.

Nor does the proposed intention of protecting the dignity of the sacred books lend any aid to the patrons of the mythical interpretation; because from it, this dignity would suffer more damage than derive advantage.

Obs. 1. It is well known how keenly the adversaries of our religion have carped at those miraculous interventions, which appear in most of the sacred historical writings. Were it then, it is argued, possible to show that this miraculous garb has no real foundation in the nature of things, but has merely a reference to the mode in which things are described, and is in fact mythical and fictitious; then by stripping off this dress, added, as it were, by the hands of men, and in which the real events are enveloped, they would be restored to their own divine simplicity; and we should thus render the greatest service to the dignity and honour of the sacred books, by removing so very grievous a cause of offence. This is indeed a splendid commendation, which the patrons of this new mode of interpretation arrogate to their system, and consequently worthy of being fairly estimated how far it is just.

Obs. 2. First of all, then, we remark, that the mythical mode of interpretation did not originate from that intention of defending the dignity of the sacred books, by which it is now endeavoured to be recommended, but from a very different cause; from a recently originated desire of giving an interpretation of profane mythology, particularly the Greek and Homeric, the author of which was Heyne.^a For, as he affirmed, that the origin of all nations, their

^a In his new edition of the "Bibliotheca Apollodori," and in his dissertation on the mythical ages in the "Comm. Gotting." vol. viii.

most ancient histories, and the very first elements of human wisdom, lay concealed under mythi, he also argued that the same principle was to be applied to some of the ancient narrations contained in the books of the sacred code, and highly approved of its application to very many of them: hence, then, the mythic ages, which were attributed to other nations, began likewise to be ascribed to the Hebrews, and some of the most ancient of their hoistorical relations were explained agreeably to this opinion. But this new mode of interpreting, once introduced into the sacred volume, by degrees occupied at last the whole of it. An impulse was also added by the philosophy founded by KANT. For while it endeavoured to place the doctrines believed by mankind on new foundations, it had the effect on many of leading them to think differently, from what they formerly did, respecting the origin of revealed religion, and of causing them to attempt ascribing it indeed to God as its author, excluding, however, any extraordinary intervention of his providence. As the mythical mode of interpretation seemed to afford an admirable help for their purpose, it highly pleased them, because by its means they could easily derive those miraculous, and, forsooth, incredible phenomena, from the traditions and opinions of men. While, then, they assented in this to the adversaries of our religion, because of the intolerable multitude of miracles in the sacred books, there were among them some who were continually repeating that this great rock of offence might be removed, were the events, by rejecting this external form, recalled to the ordinary arrangements of divine Pro-

vidence; and under this pretence they were quite eager to recommend and advise to others the mythical manner of interpretation.

Obs. 3. But, whatever might have been the occasion of this recommendation, let us now see what strength it possesses, and what may be urged in its defence. On this point we shall be permitted to be more brief, in proportion as we may be thought to have anticipated much of what is to be said, in P. i. S. i. C. vi., where we have defended the extraordinary interposition of God in religion, as contained in the books of the Old Testament; as also in P. ii. S. i., where we have treated regarding the abuse of philosophy when applied to the interpretation of the Old Testament. If any one will then candidly and seriously weigh those things, he must of necessity acknowledge, that the attempts of those, of whom we are here speaking, are more adapted to undermine than to protect the honour of the sacred code. Still there are some observations which it may not be without advantage to make here.

Obs. 4. We then vehemently doubt whether this new scheme, which attempts to remove every appearance of miracle, will have more effect on the adversaries of the sacred code, than all that was before advanced by its most strenuous defenders. We confess, indeed, that an undertaking is not to be judged of by its issue, and ought not to be condemned merely because it is not successful. But we do not think that the mythical mode of interpretation is of such a nature as that any great success could be expected from it. And why? Is

it to be expected that those who utterly reject our sacred books will suffer themselves to be persuaded by it to hold them in honour and esteem? Will they not rather imagine that these recent defenders of them, who participate in the same feeling of offence regarding them as they do, are driven to their shifts; as, whilst desirous of explaining away every extraordinary intervention of God in these books, they leave nothing but an empty shade of their divine original? Nor, indeed, has this mode of interpretation any thing in it which can recommend it seriously and successfully to those who have long entertained convictions hostile to the authority of the sacred code. For when they consider how fanciful, arbitrary, uncertain, doubtful and intricate this new mode is, undoubtedly they must smile at the laborious attempts of men, by which they betray the weakness of that cause which they would seem to defend. And, indeed, so conjectural is the mode by which most of those events, enveloped in *mythi*, are brought back to historical truth, that one person may assume to himself that he knows, from the imagination he has formed, what it really was; others, again, may conceive it to have been far otherwise; and others may doubt, or not know, what really happened; and hence a most strenuous defender of this new mode of interpretation, while justly reprehending some things in the attempts of others, who had tried to disentangle and strip historical truth of its mythical dress, has yet himself transformed the whole Pentateuch into a theorcritical epos; which singular hypothesis we alluded to in § 1, near the end.

Obs. 5. But, should we turn our attention to those who adhere to the belief of their forefathers regarding the divine origin of the religion which we have in our sacred books, there is no reason to expect that their belief would acquire any new strength from the mythical interpretation, or their estimation of the dignity of the sacred code be increased by it. Nay, as hitherto they have fully believed that God often appeared for the cause of religion, and interfered in a highly miraculous manner, it could scarcely be that the faith of many of the vulgar should not suffer some diminution from this highly lauded mode of interpretation quite hostile to miracles and supernatural events. For not only has it been attempted, in the language of the learned, to strip the sacred histories of this miraculous dress, but the vernacular language has also been employed for the same purpose; and will not, then, the common people, so far as they may allow themselves to give in to this new mode, learn by degrees to think more slightly of religion, when they see that divine authority which they had formerly attributed to it taken away from it? Nor can it indeed be denied, that the estimation of our most holy religion has been exceedingly diminished in the minds of very many, and all belief in it has almost disappeared in those places where this mode of interpretation has chiefly prevailed, so that the very thing which is so much recommended, under the pretence of protecting and honouring our religion, has done much more injury to it than any thing ever attempted in the way of an open and violent assault.

§ 6.

As, then, the mythical interpretation of which we are here speaking is by no means to be recommended, whatever may be urged in its favour, the interpreter of the Old Testament will better be enabled to guard against its allurements and disadvantages, the more just the idea he has formed, not only of the divine intentions in matters connected with religion, but also of the primeval genius of the Hebrew language, as well as of the times and men spoken of.

Obs. 1. That the extraordinary interferences of God were in harmony with his intentions regarding religion, we both hold, and all those ought likewise to hold who endeavour to form a true judgment of the nature and excellence of the religion of the sacred code, and who wish not to bring down and wrest divine things altogether to the exceedingly circumscribed standard of human reason. As then many of the moderns, principally through the aids of the mythical interpretation, endeavour to exclude this divine interference from the whole of the sacred code, we think that an interpreter, anxious to the degree he ought to be for the dignity of the sacred books, should abstain from it as opposed to the divine scheme in the case of religion; and, consequently, we are of opinion that he will act more wisely, should

he not admit that mode of interpretation, even with regard to the most ancient historical books of the Old Testament, because it is not the least more necessary in them than in the others; and, if once admitted, no limits can be settled within which it can be forced to stop. But the more just idea of that scheme which an interpreter has, the more correctly will he adapt himself to what may be useful to the present times and to the dignity of the sacred books, as we have already pointed out in P. ii. S. iii. § 2. obs. 2. at the beginning. For, besides that it is necessary that he have formed just notions of the divine extraordinary interventions, such as we have before defined in P. i. S. i. C. vi. § 5; it is certainly not required, nay, it is not proper, that he should imagine that God interfered in an extraordinary manner, where no sufficiently weighty reason appears for such an opinion. It is indeed, customary with the writers of the Old Testament to refer all things, without distinction, to God, and to seem to bring him in acting in all human affairs and actions; a manner to which we have referred in P. ii. S. ii. § 7. obs. 2. The interpreter, therefore, may appositely shew his judgment in determining more from the nature of the things themselves, than from expressions, whether the extraordinary or ordinary providence of God be intended, and likewise, in both of these cases, by investigating and shewing to others the divine intention so far as he is able and may consider it a proper opportunity. And whoever shall ingenuously pursue this only commendable path, will more and more perceive the fallacy of the mythical interpretation, and

will best vindicate the honour of the sacred code, and the wisdom of both the ordinary and extraordinary providence of God detailed in it.

Obs. 2. What effect a just and prudent consideration, of that primeval nature possessed by the Hebrew language, would have in sustaining the dignity of the sacred volume, I now wish by some selected instances briefly to show.

As, then, to this purpose, an intimate knowledge of the language itself, such as is not to be derived from Lexicons alone, tends above all other things; let us bring forward an example, one too particularly remarkable, from which it may be seen that a word not understood has afforded ground for a mythical interpretation. Lot's wife, because she looked back, is from the common translation of Genes. xix. 26, thought to have been changed into a pillar of salt. But this astonishing, and hard to be believed, metamorphosis arises from a perverted interpretation of the noun *נציב*, which is usually translated *statue*, or *pillar*. But in this very book of Genesis *מצבה* is the word used for *pillar*. Collating, then, the same noun *نصيب* (*נציב*) of the cognate Arabic dialect, we understand it to signify a *part* or *portion*: so that, the woman imprudently determining to return, she may be said *to have been made a part or portion of salt brine*,^a or of a salt marsh of waters bursting

^a This, in my judgment, very unfortunate criticism, is not original in Pareau, but was adopted by Dathe in his translation of Genesis xix. 26, who borrowed it from Le Clerc. It has been, however, justly rejected by Rosenmuller, Winer, Gese-

forth, that is, collating a somewhat similar form of expression in Psalm lxiii. 11, as a punishment for her rashness, *swallowed up* by these waters she

nius, &c. The only addition which Pareau has made to Dathe, is the collation of the Arabic word, which he translates *portion*, while he takes no notice of two Arabic nouns equally near in their form and from the same root, which signify *statue* or *idol*. Vide Gesenius and Winer in the word נִצִּיב. His reference to Psalm lxiii. 11, is still less satisfactory, the words of which are בִּנְתַי שְׂעִלִים יִהְיוּ, literally, *they shall be the portion of wolves*, which he seems to consider as equivalent to “being devoured, *swallowed up* of wolves.” This is not, however, the primary and proper meaning of the phrase, although it is, no doubt, implied in it as a consequence. Rosenmuller has well explained it in these words, “erunt quasi demensum ferarum,” adding, “metaphora a distributione ferculorum in conviviis petita.” The phrase, then, does not mean, as Pareau’s reference to it would require, “they shall form a *part or portion* of wolves,” but they shall be *the part or portion* which falls to the lot of wolves.”

It seems singular and almost inconsistent in Pareau to have been so anxious to get rid of a plain literal meaning in this passage, after the reasonings he had just been adducing. There is surely nothing in this incident more deserving to be called “*mira ista credituque difficilis metamorphosis*,” as he denominates it, than there is of supernatural and miraculous in many of those cases which he would defend against the mythical interpreters. There is a rule in criticism to be observed above all others, which is, that an interpreter should fully understand the scope and intention of the book he interprets and of its author, and keep them clearly in mind, without which he must fall into numberless errors. One great object of the Old Testament manifestly was, to prove that JEHOVAH was the one true God, and that *all events* are under his immediate direction : that he is not only the supreme guide and director, but also the judge of all, punishing those who disobey him, and rewarding

perished: for that she not only looked back, but had begun her return towards Sodom, can scarcely be doubted, compare Luke xvii. 31, 32.

and protecting all who, through a full faith or confidence in him, endeavour to do what he commands. How this revelation of himself, the *invisible* God, was to be made to man without miraculous interferences, which would clearly shew his power and purposes, seems impossible even *to be imagined*. The man, then, who does not boldly deny that God can possibly *reveal himself particularly* to man, must either acknowledge the indispensable necessity of miraculous interferences for this purpose, or shew some other method by which the invisible God, "whom no man hath seen nor can see," could thus reveal himself to mankind in general: which, it is believed, is impossible. In miraculous interferences we, of course, include fore-knowledge or prophecy. That the infliction of punishment, in this instance, manifestly coming from the hand of God himself, according to the common version, which Pareau's interpretation does away with, is completely adapted to shew that God will be obeyed, which is one great purpose of the Old Testament, (Vide 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23), must be evident to every one who reflects. And that it was one of those events recorded for our instruction, is proved by our Lord himself referring to it in Luke xvii., which allusion would by no means be so forcible on Pareau's interpretation.

I have been led to make these remarks on this criticism of Pareau from a wish to guard the young student against placing much confidence in his attempts in this way, especially when he grounds them on the Arabic or other cognate dialects. In this respect he is inclined, as it appears to me, to carry the principles of his excellent countryman, Schultens, to an extreme length. Indeed, I am much disposed to think that Pareau is an instance, not singular however, of a person well qualified to compile and digest sensible and judicious rules of criticism, while, in the application of them, he is by no means very successful. The criticisms which immediately follow do not seem to be any better founded — *Translator*.

Next with regard to the primeval genius of the Hebrew language; prudent attention to this circumstance will enable us to throw no small light on some passages, in which a mythus is supposed to exist. From this genius of the language it happens, that the more ancient the age, the more frequently is God introduced as speaking: e. g. Genesis. i. ; iii. 22 ; vi. 3, 7 ; viii. 21, 22 ; xi. 6, 7 ; xviii. 17—21 : in which passages, as the speech of God is not said to have been heard, what was in his mind has been, as it were, brought into action and almost subjected to the senses. And on the same grounds we think, that the singular conference in the 3d chapter of Genesis between the woman and the serpent, which represents, as really transacted, (*quasi ad vivum*), the thoughts excited in her at the sight of him, must be explained. To the ancient genius of the language also is altogether adapted,—the account of the first woman, formed from a rib of the first man while buried in sleep, Genesis ii. 18—23, which is given by Adam himself, relating what had appeared to him in his sleep as if it had really happened ; and the difficult passage regarding the wrestling of Jacob, Genesis xxxii. 25—32, which took place in a dream during the night, so that great pain was the consequence, seems necessary to be understood in like manner. Lastly, we may also refer to this head the description of our first parents shut out from Paradise, Genesis iii. 24. The passage is highly figurative, and paints, under the image of divine guards, who with drawn swords prevented any entrance into Paradise, flames bursting forth from the earth, or

clouds darting lightnings from the top of the mountains.

Obs. 3. Finally, a just idea of the times and persons spoken of, is highly useful to an interpreter. For unless this be attended to even in ordinary affairs, which, however, are alien from the genius of our age and country, it must be that many things strange and highly offensive will occur to us. How much more then is it requisite seriously to attend to this in the extraordinary affairs of men and times exceedingly different from ours?—The Mosaic description of the formation of the earth, breathing, as we have above shown, § 3. obs. 5., the noble excellence of its divine origin, is suited to the capacities of the first ages and men, ascribing in a manner wisely adapted to the state of children the origin of all visible things to one God, so as to represent to the eyes how incomparable is the great Architect, and how excellent he intended the nature of man to be.—The trial of Abraham urged by the divine command, Gen. xxii. to sacrifice his son Isaac, very highly offends many of the present day; which, according to them, being quite opposed to the dictates of pure reason, they are continually repeating ought to be received as a mythus, so as that we may understand God to be introduced *quasi ex machina*. But, indeed, it has nothing in it abhorrent from the genius of the age in which the command was given, or of the person to whom it was given. For neither at that time were those opinions, such as the latest philosophy has laid down regarding pure reason, formed: nor did Abraham, judging truly that nothing could be done by the supreme God which was not most righteous

Gen. xviii. 25., presume to doubt of the equity of this very severe command, being persuaded that he ought in all things to obey God, who is always both wise and gracious. And the trial itself, as the event showed, was so adapted to display the admirable piety of the man, who was to be the founder of a nation sacred to God, and the immovable confidence which he reposed in the divine promises, that nothing can be justly reckoned more worthy of God.—Even greater offence has been taken at the dialogue between Balaam and his ass, Numb. xxii. 28, &c. Whether this took place in a vision, or may be supposed to have really happened, effected in some way through divine power, it must certainly be judged of from the notions of the men and the times. The Moabites were much addicted to enchantments; and here their prophet Balaam, opposed by an unheard of prodigy, and, as it were, by his own weapons, was forced to submit to the will of Jehovah, the true God and the tutelary deity of the Israelites.—But again, if we apply the same rule of the ideas of the men and times to the plagues of Egypt brought in an extraordinary way on that country, each one of them must appear well adapted both to confound those skilled in magical arts, and to vindicate the honour of Moses the divine ambassador, and of God himself: nay, the more even that we attend to the nature of the climate and soil of Egypt, so much the more will they be thought consonant to both.—The sojourning of the most holy ark of the Israelites when captured among the Philistines, and the bringing back of it to its country, is also full of miracle, 1 Sam. v. and vi.

But whatever of a highly extraordinary nature appears in either of these cases, as it can in nowise be ascribed to fortuitous accident, because that would, in the whole of this history, be more extraordinary than even the miraculous intervention of God, so likewise was it quite adapted to the nature of the men, the times, and consequently of their superstitions. For the whole of the relation of the events, if we transport ourselves back to the age to which they belong, and the place where they happened, must be acknowledged to carry along with it the strongest conviction of its fidelity. Lastly, not to accumulate more examples, we may perceive in the extraordinary dreams which are sometimes related as impressed by divine power upon the mind for some definite purpose, the wisdom of God accommodating itself to the opinions of men prone to imagine something divine in dreams of a more remarkable kind; whilst in the interpretation of these, attempted in vain by human powers, he often and clearly vindicated his own honour among the nations addicted to the worship of false gods. The more diligently we attend to and lay open this most wise accommodation, and highly suitable display of the divine majesty in certain miraculous events contained in the sacred history, the more will it prove satisfactory to the ingenuous friends of truth and religion: while the mythical interpretation, however alluring it may seem, has really nothing in it consonant with the dignity of the sacred books.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE USE TO BE DERIVED FROM GIVING ATTENTION TO THE DIVERSITY OBSERVABLE IN THE HISTORICAL WRITERS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

§ 1.

The historical writings of the Old Testament have in them this in general, that, at whatever time some of them may have been composed, they transport us into that very age of which they treat: should, however, an interpreter pay attention to whatever each of them has peculiar to himself, he may convert it to his own purposes.

Obs. 1. Having already in P. i. S. i. C. v. § 2 and 4, when treating of the authenticity and historical faith of the books of the Old Testament, briefly stated the principal reasons, which, considering the great antiquity of these books, may satisfy an ingenuous lover of truth: it would take up too much time, and be foreign to our purpose, to enter into a more full discussion in this place for the sake of strengthening this conviction, of the time when, the authors by whom, and the aids by which they were composed and completed: yet, however, with regard to this point

we shall make some observations, in a brief manner, concerning each of them. With regard to all of them, however, we observe, that these writings, part of them completed in the times of which they treat, part of them compiled with the utmost fidelity from more ancient documents, transport us into the very age of which they relate a portion of the history. Compare C. ii. § 1. obs. 3.

Obs. 2. Besides this property which is common to all the historical writers of the Old Testament, we must attend to something which each has peculiar to himself, partly to be attributed to the nature of the age on whose history he is employed, and partly to the object of the writer. What this is, we think we shall best indicate by running over each of the historical writings in the order mostly of time, and bringing into view whatever may be most particularly deserving of notice connected with our object. But on this head, as being of a most extensive nature, we must not run out or digress too far; as what we propose will suffice to shew, as it were, to others the path which they must pursue.

§ 2.

In the writings, then, which we attribute to Moses as the author, it is useful to attend to the diversity of narrations written in the most artless manner; which diversity is both adapted to the nature of the times to which these narrations

relate, and is strictly connected with the object of Moses, the legislator and divine leader of the Israelites.

Obs. 1. A remarkable difference is perceptible in the book of GENESIS when compared with the other Mosaic books, both as it treats of events long anterior to the age of Moses himself, extending even to the very origin of the human race, and too, as it presents to us different authors. For that it consists of different historical documents has been already (Vol. i. p. 118) hinted, and, at the same time, we very briefly mentioned the indications of the diversity of the ages and authors which appear in the book itself. What advantage an interpreter may derive from attending to the difference of diction arising from this cause, may be understood from what we have remarked in Chap. iii. § 6. *obs.* 2. But it is also worthy of observation, that the historical relations in this book are much fuller from the time that Abraham was called on to leave his native country, to the time of the arrival of the Israelites in Egypt, and the death of Joseph. Before that period, whilst only those relations were composed and studiously handed down to posterity, the subjects of which were reckoned particularly deserving of remembrance, among which were some peculiar genealogies considered of great value by the earliest of mankind; these relations, too, being as it appears preserved by men who had a great care for religion: it is not causelessly or improbably believed that Abraham, the father of a race that was to be sacred to God, the prince, and, as it

were, high priest of his own family, endeavoured in some way carefully to record the events of his own life, and thus by his example recommended this to each one of his posterity, who in succession was at the head of the family.^a Thus, therefore, it was

^a That the art of writing was quite familiar to men in the days of Moses cannot reasonably be doubted by any one who believes that the book of Exodus was composed by him, when attention is paid to the way in which he is commanded to write certain things in a book, and to rehearse them in the ears of Joshua, *Exod. xvii. 14.* See also *Num. xvii. 2, &c.* Had this art been a new invention, either discovered by Moses or imparted to him by God, undoubtedly a fact so much to the honour of the nation, and also adding credibility to the history, from being the first written book, would not have been passed over in silence. Much might easily be said to shew the improbability, nay, almost the absurdity, of such silence. Those, again, who have imagined that the ten commandments, written by the finger of God himself, furnish the first instance of writing, forget that the writing commanded to Moses, as a thing quite familiar to him, in the xvii. of Exodus, was prior to the writing of the commandments by God. Indeed, had not writing been an invention long prior to Moses, probably anterior to the deluge, it seems probable that he would, in the course of his history, have had occasion to have mentioned it; particularly if we adopt the idea in the text, of the book of Genesis being made up of different documents, written by different authors, at very different ages. For it would have been natural, and apparently indispensable, had the era of the invention of writing been recent, for the compiler to have recorded how the documents prior to that date had been preserved; whereas, if known from the remotest antiquity, no such intimation was necessary. It is deserving of notice, that the last of these documents, of which the book of Genesis has been believed to be composed, (as beginning with the peculiar phrase *אלה תולדות* repeated five times previously,

that these relations, both those which were more ample and those which were more brief, although devoid of all art, were so much connected with the design of Moses, whom God had constituted the legislator and leader of the race sacred to himself, as that he placed them most suitably as an introduction to his own writings: while, at the same time, it so happened that, notwithstanding the very imperfect state of historical composition among this tribe, their rise and progress are placed in so clear a light, as that none of the nations of antiquity, even those among them who were most cultivated, can be brought into comparison in this respect.

Obs. 2. Those books which are generally known by the names of EXODUS, LEVITICUS, and NUMBERS, contain the annals relating to Moses himself, his laws, and the Israelitish people whose leader he was. The

vid. Rosenmuller, Schol. in Genes. ii. 4;—and compare Matth. i. 1,) commences with the 19th verse of the xxvth chapter, from which to the end of the book, there is no indication of change of style or of a different author. Now, it has long appeared to me highly probable that this portion of the book was written by Joseph, who, it cannot be denied, had all the qualifications of *inspiration*, natural abilities, and perfect human means of information from his father, and from the great part he himself had in the transactions recorded. The arguments by which this might be established are so numerous that they cannot even be hinted at in a note;—but, if any one will attentively peruse this great portion of the book, and think who was best qualified to write such a circumstantial account of many things contained in it, and to record with accuracy the highly important prophecy uttered by Jacob on his death-bed, he must, I doubt not, be satisfied that Joseph was that person.—*Translator.*

first two chapters of Exodus, indeed, in which the numbers of the Israelites at the time of their arrival in Egypt, their oppression, the birth of Moses, and the early period of his life are briefly described, although connected by this subject with what follows, may not improbably be supposed to have had as their author another person who possessed information regarding these things. At least the fuller annals of Moses respecting his own affairs, commence with the 3d chap. of Exodus, in which is related the manner in which the office of divine ambassador was committed to him. What follows in this book and in the two immediately succeeding, consists partly in the historical description of events which took place, not so, however, as to exhibit a continuous history, but are often interrupted by the mention of other things. The principal part, however, of these books is occupied with laws and constitutions of various kinds, and these too not arranged in a regular order, or reduced under their proper heads, but set down as they were delivered in the progress of time, and as occasion demanded: nay, some of them are sometimes repeated, and, where necessary, rendered more definite. Consequently these laws and constitutions, and these histories, admonitions too and exhortations, not unfrequently succeed each other by turns: so that to a genuine interpreter traces deeply impressed present themselves every where in these books of the highly remote age in which Moses lived, of the very difficult circumstances in which he was placed, and in fine, of the very noble object which he had in view,

and to which he was directed by divine communications.

Obs. 3. The last Mosaic book, distinguished by the title of DEUTERONOMY, contains the speeches of this man delivered in more than one assembly of the people when about to enter the promised land, and likewise laws, partly new, partly enacted formerly, and generally in some degree either changed to adapt them to the approaching state of the people, or more fully explained, or recommended by new motives.—While I read those addresses interrupted by a recapitulation of certain laws, accommodated and suitable to the circumstances of Moses, I seem to myself to hear this great and incomparable legislator, and most venerable old man, speaking : who after having overcome the most incredible distresses, now near to death and to the end of his labours, was endeavouring with the greatest dignity and most affectionate earnestness to incite his countrymen, by every means, to the observance of his laws ; and I, indeed, feel most deeply convinced that nothing can be imagined more suitable to his character, design, and situation. Consequently I should be altogether astonished should any Hebrew of a later age, even the most cultivated, have exhibited such a prodigy in the historical art, as to have put such speeches into Moses' mouth ; 'when among that people no perfection in that art was ever attained.—But, that the last two chapters of this book were added as a proper supplement to the Mosaic writings, every one must readily perceive.

§ 3.

In the other historical books of the Old Testament, finished principally before the Babylonish captivity, a great diversity suitable to the diversity of their ages is perceptible, although the object be one and the same, and consequently most closely connected with religion.

Obs. 1. The book which bears the name of JOSHUA has manifestly this object connected with religion, and consequently with the subject of the Mosaic books, as it relates in what manner the Israelites under Joshua, the genuine successor of Moses, occupied the promised land: which history it brings down to the death of Joshua. But although the book, such as we have it, cannot be attributed to him as the author, it is, however, of the highest antiquity, and compiled with the utmost fidelity and simplicity, chiefly from what Joshua partly himself wrote, and partly from what he had made others write. It does not, therefore, consist of a full history flowing in one continuous stream, but is made up of a collection of different memoirs, such as the occasion had dictated, or the circumstances of the remote age permitted. From this it is that the book is prolix in the relation of those things, which could not but seem to Joshua and the other chiefs of the people of the greatest importance: such as the passage of Jordan by the Israelites brought about and caused for occupying the coun-

try of Canaan, chap. i—iv. ; the safety of the Gibeonites extorted by deceit, chap. ix. ; the names of the conquered princes, chap. xii. ; but in particular, the boundaries of the districts which fell by lot to each of the tribes of the Israelites, chap. xiv—xix. In the same way in all respects, the events, the conversations, the various feelings of the nation and of Joshua, are admirably in keeping with the nature of the times, men and circumstances ; so likewise with this is quite consentaneous what is said concerning the Israelites in chap. xxiv. 31, that as long as they had Joshua as their leader, and even for some time after his death, they persevered in the worship of Jehovah, whilst the astonishing blessings received from God remained fresh in their memory.

Obs. 2. Far different is the nature of the book of JUDGES, which we are now to contemplate. For although its object, equally conjoined with religion, is declared at its commencement, and every where afterwards appears not obscurely, its parts, however, have less connexion, and it, indeed, contains only some detached memoirs, as it were, and these sometimes very brief, relating to the history or rather to the state of the Israelites from the death of Joshua down to about the time when Samuel flourished. But as it consists of three parts, having distinct subjects : of sketches of the history of the judges or governors of the people, chap. i.—xvi. ; and of two appendixes ; one of which is contained in chap. xvii. and xviii., and the other in chap. xix.—xxi. : we shall treat of each of these parts one by one, as likewise of a separate appendix of the book, viz. the book of Ruth.

1. What is the object of the greatest part of the book comprehended in chap. i. to xvi. inclusive, is clearly declared in chapters i. and ii., which is to shew, that, from being tired of war, and from the love of peace, the Israelites had not sufficiently provided for their own safety, nor subdued or expelled the Canaanites as they ought to have done ; nay, that unmindful of the former astonishing works of Jehovah, they had revolted from his true worship, and had in consequence brought grievous evils upon themselves ; that, as often as they became affected with a deep sense of this misconduct, they were delivered by Judges raised up by God, but that afterwards they anew fell back into their former perverseness, so exceedingly destructive to themselves. Agreeably with this intention thus defined, are detailed, from the beginning of the second chapter, those circumstances of the Israelites, on occasion of which each of the Judges was created, and the principal exploits done by them for the deliverance of the people. This part of the book contains indications both of the highest antiquity, as well as most evident ones of historical authority, among which stand out prominently the highly spirited hymn composed by Deborah, chap. v., and the admirable moral fable of Jotham, chap. ix. 6—15 : but it at the same time contains very many things of a highly extraordinary nature, which have given offence to not a few. But the more these are examined in reference to the nature of the times and of the people, and the greater regard that is had to the intentions of God, wisely accommodated to the nature of the times and people, in

his government of the nation of the Israelites, the less will the causes of offence appear.—Whether these times of the Judges should be called heroic ages, we greatly doubt. There were indeed splendid actions performed, although for the most part in a disorderly and always very rude manner, both in their warlike and other memorable exploits that took place in a less usual manner. But these are altogether improperly compared with the heroic ages of the Greeks, such as they are described by the poets, in which heroes, or demigods, or the sons of gods act the chief parts. They are rather to be viewed as the first ages immediately succeeding the establishment of their state, and, as it were, their youthful days, in which, consequently, they manifested a juvenile forwardness very fatal to themselves, but occasionally repressed by these unhappy consequences, which gave very fitting occasion for exhibiting in the manner of the times, the fortitude and daringness of some men who had the safety and deliverance of their country at heart. The whole, however, of this part of the book, is such as almost to convince one that it came from the hand of Samuel, with whose views, well known from history, the manifest purpose of this part undoubtedly admirably agrees: especially if what he says in a solemn assembly of the people, 1 Sam. xii. 7—11, be taken into account in the comparison.

2. The first appendix of the book, chap. xvii. and xviii. contains nothing different from the accustomed order of things, and gives a history of what seems referrible to the period immediately succeeding the

death of Joshua, *compare* Josh. chap. xviii. 1, and xix. 47, but in its subject, and in the manner of the narration, cannot give the least handle for suspecting a vamped tradition, much less an imposture, but, on the contrary, inspires into the mind the greatest persuasion of its truth. But, although it exhibits clearly how much at that time religion was depraved and morals perverted, and in so far is manifestly connected in its object with that of the former part; it is however reckoned properly not to be the work of the same author, who never uses the clause occurring in it chap. xvii. 6, xviii. 1, in which it is said, that “there was then no King in Israel, but every one did that which was right in his own eyes.” And an expression of this kind, which seems to indicate an author much pleased with the royal dignity recently introduced as giving hopes of better times, forbids us indeed to suppose Samuel the author of this appendix, as he highly reprobated the change of government, yet, however, it seems to prove to us that it was composed in his time, and that what is said in chap. xviii. 30, that the worship of idols remained in the tribe of Dan ער גלות הארץ, which we should translate, *until the inhabitants of that region* (the Danites who occupied it), *removed*, or retired from thence: for the very pious care of King David, in extirpating the public worship of idols, prevents us from understanding this expression of the Babylonish captivity, particularly when we add to this, another more defined mark of time in the next verse, the 31st.

2. The other appendix, chap. xix.—xxi., points to the same uncertain author, as it contains the same

clause of a King not yet being in Israel, and hence the people acting as they pleased, chap. xix. 1 ; xxi. 25, as it speaks in a similar manner of the depravity of the times, and relates a history of the same age nearly, *compare* chap. xx. 28. It, too, carries along with it no less indications of its full veracity.—Each appendix, then, as well as the greater part of the book, describes a state of things which must be judged of by the genius of ruder ages, although this state is not described exactly in the same manner in the book, and in its appendixes.

4. With regard to the separate appendix of the same book, contained in that of RUTH, its commencement sufficiently shews that it had not the same author as the other appendixes ; for the history which it relates is said to have happened in the time of the Judges, without using that clause which is so remarkable in each of the former. It has, besides, quite a different subject, although likewise connected with religion, and evinces that the corruption of manners was not general among the Israelites, and that the consequences of good affections and uprightness are happy. And the more attentively we consider this story, full of ingenuous simplicity, and of highly commendable conduct, as well as honourable to that family of which David was descended, the more are we inclined to suspect that its author was Samuel, who having extracted it from some ancient document preserved in the family of David, destined it for the use of the Israelites, with the intent of making it known to them that David, whom by the divine command he had consecrated to the royal dignity, had had ancestors ven-

erable for their true and genuine piety ; and also of teaching them, that in every condition of life, and even in the most depraved times, there was nothing more profitable and commendable than such piety.

Obs. 3. That the books inscribed with the name of SAMUEL were made up of different historical documents, and that attention to this their composition is highly useful to an interpreter, may be collected from what we have observed above, Vol. ii. 80, compared with Vol. ii. 46, &c. After, too, a somewhat continuous history of David, certain appendixes are added, 2 Sam. xxi.—xxiv. But at whatever time they received the form they now have, which appears to us to have been long anterior to the captivity, they bear in their very face, by the detail of events without even the slightest appearance of art, the most striking marks of the most undisguised truth, and of its inseparable accompaniment, the rehearsal of the very words of the actors ; as we have remarked, Vol. ii. 75. As the general intention of these books was most particularly connected with religion, so likewise this peculiar object appears in them, of ingenuously and candidly relating the life of Samuel, who had a great influence on the civil and sacred affairs of the Israelites, next, the life, character, actions, and creation of Saul as their first king, and lastly, the principal actions and varied fortunes of David, in whose descendants, Saul being set aside, the royal dignity was in future to be established. They contain also very many other things, mentioned as occasion offered, referring both to the differing condition of the times and state of manners, and to the character of certain persons represented without any fictitious

colouring. Each of these things, therefore, here briefly touched upon by us, should be carefully applied to use, and where required, suited to the genius of the age.

Obs. 4. What we generally call the Books of **KINGS**, carries on the history of the Israelites from the last days of king David almost to the captivity. This history is fuller in describing the actions of the very celebrated king Solomon, but much more brief regarding those of the other kings : and, indeed, those things of them are principally remarked which are most connected with religion, to which continual regard is had in these books ; and for the most part only certain excerpts are given from those fuller and often quoted annals, which are sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, according, as far as we can conjecture at least, as they seemed to the author who composed them, to contain more or less remarkable events, and more connected with his purpose, which had a reference to religion. Hence it may be explained why it is that those things which took place in the kingdom of Israel, when the empire was divided into two parts after the death of Solomon, are more fully detailed than those which happened in the kingdom of Judah, of which the author being a subject, wished in consequence to be more copious in relating these as being less known. But there is another thing more difficult to be understood, that in the kingdom of Israel, though more disgraced by its perversion of religion, there are many more, and, also, more singular instances of miraculous divine interpositions than in the kingdom of Judah. Regarding this point, it is not unworthy of observation, although scornfully rejected by many of the moderns,

that it was quite consistent with the wise government of God, that in that kingdom, where a worship highly reprobated by him was established by public authority, and where his dignity was openly and continually contemned by the continued and uninterrupted ordinances of their kings, he should uphold his majesty by every means most fitted to the genius of the men and the times. But these books should be esteemed by us to be composed in this way ; that, whilst the various authors were of the most undoubted fidelity, one of whom wrote of the affairs of Solomon's reign, another of those of the kingdom of Israel and Judah as long as they lasted together, and a third of what happened after the destruction of the former almost to the time of the overthrow of the latter ; there was also another divinely inspired person, who having survived this overthrow, joined together these different collections, at the same time adding some things which related to the destruction of the kingdom : and who, as he finishes with the account of king Jehoiachin's restoration to liberty in his exile, soon after brought his work to a conclusion.

§ 4.

Some of the historical books pertain to the times subsequent to the Babylonish captivity ; each of which almost is distinguished by its own particular genius, but each in its own different way and diversity of object, equally directed to the cause of religion.

Obs. 1. The books of CHRONICLES, both in their genius and diction, argue an author who lived after the return of the Jews from their captivity. And, indeed, he so refers, near the end of these books, to the return itself, as there to advert to the accomplishment of the divine promise. For that this passage belongs to these books, and was not afterwards added by some other hand from the book of Ezra, which begins with it, we cannot doubt, after having carefully considered the matter. It, therefore, seems to us most likely that Ezra composed this book, with a particular object, closely connected however with religion, for the use of the Jews, who were restoring their state and their religion, and that he employed, for this purpose, certain collections made for the most part from more ancient records the same as quoted in the books of Kings, and written during the existence of the kingdom, but when verging to an end, either by certain Levites induced by their great attachment to religion, or by disciples of the schools of the prophets, or by individuals of both these classes: and as, by these authors, the sources from which they drew their information were indicated, Ezra also added the mention of them for the greater testimony of their truth, although these fuller annals were no longer in existence. For that they perished along with the state itself, as being preserved in the palace of their kings, we have already, vol. i. p. 55, stated as not improbable. From the observations now made, the whole nature of those books will be better understood. As, then, it was of much importance to the Jews, on their return to their country, to possess

genealogical tables, Ezra wrote out such tables, as far as he could ascertain the names, and judged it to be suitable to his purpose, subjoining occasionally, agreeably to the Oriental and ancient Hebrew custom, some historical notes, 1 Chr. chap. i.—ix. He next gave a history of the affairs of the kingdom of Judah, which were alone deemed of much importance, from the time of the death of Saul when David ascended the throne; in which he only mentions the kingdom of Israel when it was necessary. In the historical portion, which is the principal part of both books, he only repeats the things contained in the books of Samuel and Kings, which could scarcely be passed over in a continuous history: some things in them he omits, and supplies others, and in these supplements he inserts particularly those things which have a reference to religion and divine worship.

Obs. 2. What is peculiar in the style of both books of Chronicles, is likewise observable in the style of that book attributed to EZRA and bearing his name, where it is written in the Hebrew language. Ezra, then, of the sacerdotal race, and particularly anxious about religion, after having finished the books of Chronicles by a brief notice of the return from the captivity, when the first of the Jews returned into their country, seems to have determined, at the time when he came into Judea, to write in a separate book an account of the principal things pertaining to the restoration of the government and religion, and to have begun it in exactly the same words with which he had finished the former, as thinking that that brief account of the return from the captivity

was a most suitable introduction to his new book. But as he wished, in this book, to give an account of the most remarkable transactions of the reinstated Jews, he has comprehended these in chap. i.—vi., as derived from the best sources of information to which he could have access, and, therefore, has inserted a document at length, written in the Chaldaic language, chap. iv. 7 ; vi. 18. Afterwards, chap. vii.—x., he gives an account of what happened after his own arrival: but as he wrote the transactions when opportunity was allowed him, and as he joined together his own collections, as he had done the former, without any art, and, consequently, not according to the rules of any continuous history, hence it is that in this second part of his book, he not only inserted the letters given to him by the Persian king, when going to Judea, in the Chaldaic language, in which they had been written, chap. vii. 11—26, but even speaks of himself sometimes in the first and sometimes in the third person, being quite careless of avoiding this incongruity.

Obs. 3. The book which not only has the title of NEHEMIAH, but in its commencement announces him as its author, manifests him as such in by far the greater portion of it: in which he has spoken in such a manner of what he had done for the protection of the returned Jews, as often to display a mind ingeniously conscious to itself of rectitude in the great difficulties and impediments with which he had to struggle, c. v. 19 ; vi. 3, 11, 14 ; xiii. 8, 14, 21, 22, 29, 31. But while holding a high office in the court of the king of the Persians, his devoted attachment

to his countrymen, who, he understood, were making little advancement in the establishment of their civil or sacred affairs, nay, were even in the greatest distress, alone moved him to ask and obtain leave from his prince to assist them in every way, c. i. ii. 1—8. Clothed, then, with the dignity and authority of the king's lieutenant, c. ii. 9, he exercised this power most valuably in Judea during the lifetime of Ezra, and efficaciously applied it. What he did during twelve continuous years, compare c. v. 14, he seems to have committed to writing, from c. i. to c. vii. 5, subjoining, not long before he prepared for his departure, a catalogue of those, who had returned to their original country, vii. 6—73, which he had found written. Afterwards, when he had returned into Judea a second time, with the same object as formerly, he made certain additions, which he had partly found written, c. viii. to the xii. 26, and partly wrote himself, c. xii. 27 to xiii. 6, as a necessary supplement to those memoirs which he had formerly composed; and from c. xiii. 7, he briefly and summarily relates what he afterwards did for the restoration of affairs. In this manner, then, the whole nature of the book seems to be best exhibited, which requires to be explained suitably to the very imperfect manner of writing history in that age.

Obs. 4. Very different from those books of the Old Testament, of which we have heretofore spoken, is the book of ESTHER; the author of which a Jew, although relating a very memorable piece of history, which manifested the remarkable care of divine providence in warding off a danger that hung over his

countrymen remaining in the Persian provinces, and which gave rise to the celebration of a sacred annual festival, yet has not directly ascribed the event to God, whom he has never mentioned even by name. If it be allowed to us to form a not improbable conjecture in this matter, we seem to behold in its author a Jew, who, living among Persians, to whom this event had been exceedingly calamitous, was desirous of avoiding the least appearance of offence, and of carefully abstaining from extolling the greatness of the divine favour: therefore, he simply relates the history, and shews its object as connected with religion, more from the thing itself than by words. This person, however, shews himself quite equal to write any continuous history well, having acquired this skill among the Persians, a more cultivated people. He is accurate even to minuteness, so that he seems to have written not long after the event, and to have been acquainted with the royal annals to which he appeals, c. x. 2. But the greater knowledge of the ancient manners of the Persians one has acquired; and the more he has studied the character of the well known Xerxes, who, according to the most probable opinion, is the same with Ahasuerus, the more clearly will he see that every thing in this book is painted to the life, and represented quite agreeably to truth.

§ 5.

Lastly, there are historical passages in the

writings of some of the prophets, as much connected with religion as their office itself.

Obs. 1. As those among the Hebrews were, in particular, styled prophets, who, as the extraordinary interpreters of the divine will and ambassadors of God in the cause of religion, were bound to uphold the honour of that religion, and to lay open its real nature and recommend it, it readily appears that what they wrote in conformity to this their office was connected in the strictest manner with religion.

Obs. 2. Consequently what we find of an historical nature in the book of ISAIAH, c. xxxvi.—xxxix. has a clear reference to religion. And we have no doubt but that the historical part in chap. vii. of the same book, as well as the portion already mentioned, should be assigned to him as their author. It appears therefore to us, that another author chiefly derived what we read, with some alterations, in 2 Kings xviii. 13, to xx. 19, from these chapters.

Obs. 3. Neither can any one doubt that the more numerous historical portions which frequently present themselves in the prophetic book of JEREMIAH, on to the xliii. chapter, have him for their author. But doubts may be justly entertained regarding that portion contained in the lii. chapter. With slight changes, it occurs in 2 Kings xxiv. 18—xxv. 20; so that, being derived, in both cases, from a common source, we may suppose it to have been added as a very fit supplement to the book of Jeremiah, which manifestly finishes with the li. chapter.

Obs. 4. What is historical in the book of DANIEL

has long afforded great grounds of objections; and, in consequence, some of the later interpreters hold that these historical parts have been derived from traditions, which have been transformed into an altogether incredible shape. It has also appeared extraordinary that, from chap. ii. 4, to the end of chap. vii., the language of the book is Chaldee; nay, that in that portion of the book there occasionally occur words of Greek origin. This last we have never seen proved; for in some of these words the similitude is forced, in others accidental; and in the musical instruments mentioned in chap. iii. 5, they are such as that the Greek names which Strabo, Book x. p. 722, has called barbarous, may rather be supposed to have an oriental derivation. Again, although the reason is not clear why there is a continued use of the Chaldee language in the whole of that portion, it may, however, with some appearance of truth, be conjectured, that Daniel, having begun to write in that language what was spoken in Chaldee, had gone on with the same language, which was perfectly familiar to his countrymen, either on purpose or from a natural impulse, which should not be condemned by applying the exact rules of polished composition: that he had afterwards added some things in the same dialect; but that, afterwards, through the rest of the book, for some cause, he chose rather to write in Hebrew. With regard to the incredible nature of most of the relations, we are quite persuaded that they can be vindicated from the cavils brought against them, and without much difficulty be adjusted to the full satisfaction of the in-

genuous lover of truth. For we should both consider the wisdom of God, by which he sustained the honour of his name in the manner that was most forcible in a nation estranged from the knowledge of him and his worship, among which people the Jews were living in exile : and, likewise, we ought to have regard to the design of the prophet, in pursuance of which he only committed those things to writing which belonged wholly to his sacred office and his religion, but, at the same time, were in part closely connected with that civil office, which he discharged under a foreign prince ; and, in particular, we ought to attend to the nature of the times, the men, the manners and circumstances ; and employ, to the understanding and illustrating of the events detailed in this book, whatever light can be derived from any other quarter ; such, for instance, as the occasion of taking the city in Dan. v., by comparing Herodot. B. i. p. 19, and Xenophon's Cyrop. B. vii. p. 190, 191 ; which different accounts confirm each other ; nay, are even confirmed by the prophecy of Isaiah, c. xxi. 4, 5.

PART THIRD.

SECTION SECOND.

OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE POETICAL
WRITINGS.

CHAPTER I.

OF THAT WHICH IS PECULIAR TO HEBREW POETRY.

§ 1.

Whatever parts of the Old Testament have been written in poetry, are particularly distinguished from the prose writings by a peculiar structure of language, and by the very nature of the style.

Obs. 1. As the genius of the Hebrews in the more ancient periods was singularly adapted for the cultivation of poetry, a great number of poems were anciently composed by them, and a considerable part of the Old Testament is observed to be written

in poetry. To this part belong not only those books which are properly reckoned poetical, such as the book of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and the Song of Solomon; but also by far the greatest part of the prophetic books of which we shall afterwards treat, and some poems, occurring particularly in the historical books.

Obs. 2. As the language of poetry possesses a peculiar nature, by which it distinguishes itself among most nations, so there exists among the Hebrews a peculiar poetical language. Their prose style is unconnected, unfettered, remote from all cultivation and ornament, and, where the affections of the speaker or writer are not excited, exceedingly simple and almost low. But their poetic diction has something elegant, and almost studiously laboured in it: and not only does it generally rise to sublimity, but also is distinguished by its elegance and the splendour of its ornaments. Besides excelling in strength of conception and feeling, and in copiousness and boldness of images and figures, there is always observable in it something harmonious and almost musical. In it too there is a more anxious selection of words, and a greater care of the whole style: it has sometimes more rare words, forms, and significations of words, besides unusual, more elliptical, abrupt, and difficult constructions. In one word,—in the very great uniformity of language of the Hebrew writers, so great is the dissimilitude of their prose and poetical style, as scarcely will be found in a greater degree in any other language.

Obs. 3. As the language of the ancient Hebrews

itself was in the highest degree suited to poetry, among them poetry flourished, as long as the language retained its native vigour: but it could not fail to decline when the language did so. Therefore, on their former government verging to an end, both their language and their poetry sustained no little deterioration, and by the destruction of their state, and the subsequent exile of their nation, suffered so much, that even by the restoration of the state they did not recover their pristine vigour, and there were only very few who after that calamity attained to any eminence by their poetical powers. But again, there were also other causes which brought it about, that the Hebrew poets of different ages differed much from each other. For both the nature of each particular age, and the circumstances of poets, have their effect; neither is there to all of them the same degree of poetical genius, but varied according to the endless diversity of the human mind. Nor, finally, is one and the same poet at all times quite like to himself, but from the difference of theme on which he is employed, and the diversity of the affections by which he is moved, at one time he flows on like a placid river, at another he rushes like a rapid torrent. But whatever that diversity may be, there are certain peculiar characteristics of the poetic dialect of the Hebrews, already rudely sketched in *Obs.* 2, which it will be worth while to survey one by one.

Obs. 4. It does not belong to our undertaking to treat of the various sorts of Hebrew poems. But we remark, in general, that it is wrong in distin-

guishing and denominating them to follow the system derived from the Greeks, which cannot without the greatest violence be accommodated to the Hebrew poets.

§ 2.

The general peculiarity of Hebrew poetry consists in the parallelism of sentiments, which is the cause why the clauses of each verse are distributed into two or sometimes more members, which mutually respond to each other, although not always in exactly the same manner.

Obs. 1. It was common to the Hebrew poets of all ages, to aim at a certain peculiar equality in the division of their verses, and whatever was their subject, whether they rose to sublimity or were more gently moved, to arrange their sentiments expressed in poetry according to a certain harmonical system, which would exhibit their pleasing concord as it were, when distributed into shorter members. By an apt denomination this is generally called the parallelism of sentiments (*sententiarum parallelismus*): and this most ancient character of their poetry, as appears from Genesis iv. 23, 24, which is both highly simple and distinguished for no small power, has always so delighted the Hebrews, formed as it were for music, and in various ways manifesting a genius

conformed to the earliest ages, that as long as they cultivated poetry they constantly adhered to it. In this most constant use of parallelism they differed from the Arabians, although in other respects very similar to them both in their love of poetry and in their manners.

Obs. 2. This parallelism of sentiments, by which the Hebrew poetry is manifestly distinguished from their prose, is not always in exactly the same form; but as by its very nature it conduces not a little both to the adornment and force of the sentiment, so it likewise pleases and delights by its great and multiplied variety. With regard to its external form, or the distribution of its members, in which indeed we must often depart from the division in the received text, each of the verses of the same poem are for the most part to be divided into two, sometimes into three, and more rarely into four members, as in Lamentations i. 7; ii. 19. Where the members are longer than ordinary, they may sometimes be divided into two shorter, as Psalm xix. 8—11, and very rarely into three, as in Lamentations iv. 18, in the latter hemistich. But not to mention many other varieties, it will be sufficient to make some remarks on the varieties of the parallelism of sentiments itself.

Obs. 3. There are then *synonimical* parallels, or parallels so arranged, that the same sentiment is again expressed, mostly in other words signifying the same thing; which species is, of all others, the most frequent, and, in general, so managed by the Hebrew poets, as to add a wonderful degree of force to the

sentiments. Again, there are *antithetical* parallels, when the sentiments in the two members of any verse stand opposed to each other, while, at the same time, the one is closely related to the other; and, when this takes place, frequently the words in the one member are directly opposed to those in the other. This species of parallel is most particularly employed in proverbs, adages, and in certain pointed sayings; and it generally adds no little force and point to the sentiments themselves. Lastly, there are *synthetical* parallels, the nature of which is, that neither by the repetition of the same things, nor by the opposition of different things, but by the simple construction of the words, the parts or members of a verse correspond to each other: of which species, as there is a great variety, so it possesses also very peculiar force, particularly when it accumulates short sentiments, and, as is often the case, intersperses parallels of another species, principally the synonymical. As, then, this parallelism of sentiments is the principal and constantly present character of Hebrew poetry, it also constitutes the chief power of the poetic language of the Hebrews.

§ 3.

Besides this equable division of clauses or sentiments, the poetry of the Hebrews has, in the very arrangement of the words, something tuneful and melodious, although it has neither any measure of that sort which arises from the

quantity of the syllables tied down to an exact rule, nor any rythm produced by words ending in the same manner; yet, however, it sometimes employs the artifice of composing the verses in the order of the letters of the alphabet.

Obs. 1. Although no one can altogether attain the true pronunciation of the Hebrew language, yet, by those who are somewhat more than ordinarily versant in reading the Hebrew poets, it is easily perceived that there is something in them by which the ears are pleasantly affected, which, too, does not equally appear in their prose language, in those passages even where the feelings are strongly manifested; so that, whatever rythmical or musical their language contained, which is not little, they sedulously apply altogether to their poetry. Neither is there in this a sameness at all times, but an incredible diversity, so, however, for the most part managed, that by, as it were, a musical sweetness, which arises not only from the equable distribution of the clauses, but particularly from the very disposition and structure of the words, every competent judge is pleased, and, oftimes, almost without being aware, is carried along. Of this sort is particularly the incomparable description of the war horse, in Job xxxix. 19—25: in which, so to speak, one seems to behold the various motions of a noble steed, both admirably expressed, and to hear them sung under a certain, as it were, musical form.

Obs. 2. Such being the nature of Hebrew poetry, there were formerly persons who considered it to be

metrical, almost in a similar way as the Greek and Latin poetry. Some, therefore, attempted to restore this metre in one way, and some in another : but none of these have been able to satisfy themselves with their own attempts, or by their success to recommend them to others. Nor need we wonder at this ; since I am fully persuaded, that metrical feet, formed according to a certain length of syllables, were not, from the great antiquity and simplicity of their race, in use among the Hebrews. It is known that such feet are wanting among the French, Germans, Dutch, and many other European nations, however anxiously they may cultivate poetry and music, and possess a poetical language distinguished from prose by certain numbers. We acknowledge they are found in the poetry of the Arabs : but, besides that the parallelism of clauses peculiar to the Hebrew poetry, shews that the poetry of the one people is not in all respects quite similar to that of the other, this sort of metre was not always in use among the Arabs, but was recently introduced, as they themselves declare.^a

Obs. 3. Still less probable is the opinion of those who think that they have discovered verses ending in similar sounds in some, at least, of the more ancient poems of the Hebrews. For where this rhyming of words has been observed, it ought to be ascribed to accident, and should not be supposed to have been intentionally aimed at, as is the case with the Arabians : neither is it easy in all instances to bring it to an agreement with the parallelism of the clauses.

^a See Pocock's *Observations on the Manners of the Arabs*, p. 160, 161 ; and, *in nova Whittii Edit.* p. 166.

Obs. 4. But there is another contrivance, similar to what we should expect from the simplicity of children, a simplicity, indeed, in more cases than one, ascribable to the ancient Hebrews, with which their poets occasionally pleased themselves, and which consisted in arranging the verses of their poems in the order of the letters of the alphabet, so that the first words of each of the verses should represent the order of the letters—but the manner in which this is done is not always the same.^a Undoubted examples of this remain in Psalms xxv. xxxiv. xxxvii. cxi. cxii. cxix. cxlv. Proverbs xxxi. 10—31. and Lament. i.—iv. They seem to have adopted this artifice for the sake of assisting the memory, rather than with a view to ornament: and as by the very order of the letters to which they bound themselves, the impetus of the mind was much retarded, hence it is that less power and enthusiasm appear for the most part in these than in their other poems.

§ 4.

As the structure of the Hebrew poetic language is always of the sententious cast, so, generally, is its style highly figurative.

^a See on this subject Lowth, de Sac. poes. Hæb. Prælect. xxii. with Michælis' Note in the Leipsic Edition, and Rosenmuller's Argumentum to the xxv. Psalm. It deserves to be remembered, when reading what the author here says, that the same artifice was adopted by the Syrians and Persians, and even by some of the Greeks.—*Translator.*

Obs. 1. Besides the parallelism of sentiments, that peculiar and constant characteristic of Hebrew poetry, it, in common with the poetry of other nations, delights greatly in the various figures and images of speech. And, indeed, through the aid of these, poetry gains life and soul; without these it becomes languid, frigid, and, in fine, the various affections of the mind, in expressing and exciting which the chief power of true poetry is seen, seize on these, and assume them as their friends and assistants. The ancient Hebrews then, possessed of vivid genius and fervent affections, and given to be chiefly moved by objects affecting the senses, were particularly made and formed for poetry; and hence their poetry is in general highly adorned and splendid in its imagery.

Obs. 2. An opportunity has already occurred, P. ii. S. ii. § 5, obs. 3 and 4, of observing that the Hebrew poets greatly luxuriated in the use of images derived from objects of every kind. In addition, we would here observe, that in this respect they are very similar to the Arabian poets, but more discreet, guarded, and accurate: which seems attributable, partly, and without doubt, to a superior degree of cultivation, by which they approach somewhat nearer to the Greeks. And although, frequently, they may be thought by us to accumulate images too much, or in the use of them to be not sufficiently chaste, or somewhat too daring, yet it would be unjust to judge of them by our feelings, who live under so different a sky.

Obs. 3. To say nothing of the other figures of speech which the Hebrew poets frequently use, let us briefly look at the prosopopœia alone, in which they, as

well as the Arabians, wonderfully delight. There seems to be no image more adapted for presenting objects to the perceptions : and there is scarcely anything which Hebrew poetry does not introduce personified, and endue with life, nay, with the power of feeling, judging, and speaking. Examples everywhere occur in the sacred volume, from the incredible number and variety of which, it clearly appears, how happily, and how aptly the Hebrews indulge their genius in this way. Of this kind is the instance which, in P. ii. S. ii. § 5, obs. 6, we produced from Prov. viii. 22—31. To this also belongs their frequent introduction of God, approaching or speaking : as Psalm L., and Job xxxviii.—xli., and they also bring in, as always waiting on God ready to do his commands, angels or heavenly spirits, as in Ps. xci. 11, 12, and Job iv. 12—21. In these fictitious introductions of God, or angels, although we may easily discover the admirable genius of the poets ; and although what they express in their verses they have neither seen nor heard, yet in embellishing such prosopopœias, they are so eminently successful, that nothing can seem to be devised more consistent with the divine majesty.

§ 5.

Among the images in which the Hebrew poets delight, there stand forth distinguished certain fictions of genius, either devised by themselves, or

derived from some other quarter; which, although they may be called by the name of *mythi*, or *fables*, yet have nothing in them unworthy of the dignity of inspired poets.

Obs. 1. As the Hebrew poets are fond of the fictitious introductions of persons, and of God himself, so likewise they are by no means averse to other fictions of various kinds. Thus they feign the morning as furnished with wings, on which it flies and precedes the sun through the skies, Ps. cxxxix. 9.—God is described as having in the heavens his treasures of rain, snow, hail, nay of winds, which he opens at his pleasure, Deut. xxviii. 12. Job xxxviii. 22. Ps. cxxxv. 7. Jerem. x. 13 ; li. 16 : and likewise as sitting on the Cherubim, the glorious throne of his presence and majesty, carried, as it were, from the sacred temple to the highest heavens, and borne along most rapidly by the power of the winged winds through the clouds, while he causes the thunders to roll, Ps. xviii. 11.—Lastly, to pass by other instances, the heavenly inhabitants, and those who are called the holy ones, Job xv. 15, are feigned to be distributed over the visible parts of heaven, and so are designated by the names of the heavenly bodies, chap. xxv. 4. These, however, are altogether fictitious images, adapted to the understanding of the people, and well fitted for moving their feelings.—But there are also other more remarkable fictions of these poets derived from the popular opinions, which they are fond of amplifying and embellishing. One of this sort is, that when God is con-

ceived of as similar to man, a court is attributed to him, formed after the manner of the court of earthly kings and princes, Job i. 6, 7 ; ii. 1, 2. Wherefore, not only is God often represented as sitting on a throne to administer justice to men, as in the passages quoted, Vol. i. p. 293 towards the end ; but is even described as occasionally not refusing to hear a defender of the cause of man, Job xxxiii. 23—26, and even severely animadverting on his own royal ministers themselves, Job iv. 18.—But there is no fiction taken from popular opinion, more applied to their own purposes, and embellished in various ways, than the one regarding the place of the dead, already noticed by us, P. ii. S. iii. § 2. in the middle of *obs.* 3. This region, even from the most ancient times, called, שְׂאוֹל from *sinking down to the bottom*,^a and deeply depressed below the surface of the earth on which all who live, dwell, the ancient Hebrews feigned to be the common habitation of all the dead, who, however, have nothing there but a slender shade, and mournful image of life. The poets have described this region as beset with the thickest darkness, dismal with much water, and shut with gates, whose empire, death itself, even בְּלִיעֵל, or named from the appellation of the *chief of wickedness*,^b was possessing, and whose inha-

^a *A subsidendo*, are Pareau's words,—but see Gesenius, who thinks he has discovered the true etymology, as being changed from שְׂעוּל, *cavitas*, and Winer, who differs from both, taking it from שְׂעוּל, *petere*. Fancy seems to have been at work with all the three.—*Translator*.

^b The words of this clause in the original, are, “ *cujus impe-*

bitants were at rest from the evils of this life, and who sometimes tremblingly looked up to the supreme God, or were moved with astonishment at the arrival of any more than ordinarily distinguished new comer. See Job iii. 13, 17, 19, x. 21, 22, xviii. 13, 14, xxvi. 5, xxxviii. 17; Psalm xviii. 5, 6, 17; Isaiah xiv. 9—15.

Obs. 2. These, indeed, and many more poetic fictions of the Hebrews, should any one wish to call by the name of *mythi* or *fables*; there is no reason why one should oppose this. For if it be allowed to call by that name, some moral narrations invented for a particular purpose, such as occur in the sacred volume, as we have indicated in S. i. c. iii. § 1, obs. 2 and 3; why should we not give the same appellation to poetic descriptions, or fictitious representations of things, by means of which the things themselves may be subjected to the senses? And, indeed, he who knows not, or dares not, to employ fiction in his poetry, ought rather to be called a *versificator* than a poet. But the Hebrew poets excelled in the highest

rium teneret ipsa mors, etiam בליעל, sive *principis malefici* nomine dicta," of which the meaning seems to be very obscure. The author cannot surely intend to say, that *death* was called בליעל in the Old Testament: neither is it true, although Hilnerius, Bengelius, and Gussetius have inclined to the opinion, that this word has any such application as that of an appellation of the *Maleficus princeps*, or Satan, in the Old Testament. This application, if the word βελιαλ or βελιαρ, in the New Testament is to be derived from it, is undoubtedly of later origin than the completion of the Canon of the Old Testament, at least so far as appears from any use of it in these Scriptures.—*Tr.*

creative power of genius, no less than the Arabians : a power which their religion was so far from repressing or restraining, that, on the contrary, it very greatly cherished and excited it in various ways. Nor is there in any of the kinds of fictions which they employ, or in their imagination of the court of heaven itself, or of the shades below, any thing which, if considered, as it ought to be, with due regard to the genius of the times and of the nation, is inconsistent with the dignity of inspired poets, or the sanctity of a pure religion ; or which highly assimilates them to the ancient Greek and Latin poets in their mythological mode of fiction. As to what remains of this subject, we beg to refer to what we have said, S. i. C. iii. § iii. obs. 2.

§ 6.

In fine, Hebrew poetry is pre-eminent in sublimity : and this admirable quality, although, from the very nature of the thing, not equally common to all their poems, is yet so far universal, that, in this respect, no other poetry can bear a comparison with it.

Obs. 1. The sublimity which we ascribe to the poetry of the Hebrews exists certainly in part in the diction itself. For, besides that the admirable distribution of the sentiments, the harmonious arrangement, the often singular and abrupt structure, and

the exquisite selection of the words, and consequently the whole conformation of the poetic language, by which it is so strongly distinguished from their prose, has in it something by which it moves, exalts, carries along, and, as it were, pierces the mind : the diversity, the multitude, the luxuriancy and daringness of its images and figures, contribute very greatly to that quality of poetic diction which we may designate by the appellation of sublimity.

Obs. 2. But this sublimity of diction is by no means to be considered as of the same nature as the acknowledged turgidity of the Oriental and Asiatic style, such particularly as that so justly blamed in the later Arabian poets. For they frequently, in the pomp of high sounding words, have a degree of languidness and frigidity which creates disgust, a something due solely to a fancy aiming at a species of style florid and embellished in an exaggerated degree ; while the Hebrew style, flowing as it does for the most part from a noble impulse of nature and the generous excitement of an overflowing soul, has at the same time much that is delightful, and calculated admirably at one time to move the gentler affections, and, at another, violently to agitate the soul. And while the turgid elevation of style often exalts mean and low things, and often is almost destitute of any feeling, the sublimity of the Hebrew poetry is equally apparent in the subject as in the style, and thus conjoins at once a sublimity of ideas and feelings.

Obs. 3. As the Hebrew poets have not that studied and affected grandeur of words, such as appears in the later Asiatic poetry, hence it is that their sublimity is

at one time greater and at another less, according to the different genius of each individual writer ; and, in particular, according to the different subjects of which they treat. For they did not make it an object to appear sublime, but to be so ; and to this they themselves were sometimes impelled by the greatness of their subject, although otherwise rather fitted, by their genius, to a more subdued mode of composition. Let us take for an example David, who, though inferior to Moses in sublimity, yet sometimes equals him in this poetic virtue : and as the latter represents, as it were, to our senses, in the 90th Psalm, v. 2—4, the incomprehensible eternity of the supreme God, so David, Ps. cxxxix. 2—12, represents his immensity, by which he is every where most fully present, both by his knowledge and his power, and which no one can at all comprehend ; while, at the same time, both paint the divine greatness in so lively a manner, that it cannot be clearly determined which of the two excels most in sublimity.

Obs. 4. The poetry of the Hebrews, then, excels in sublimity both of ideas and subjects. It loves, indeed, to be employed in celebrating the greatness of God, such as it may be seen either in his attributes, or in his works and government, or in the religion revealed by him, or in the splendid worship full of magnificence which he prescribed ; or, in fine, in the history and extraordinary fates of the Israelitish nation ; and which, in general, adds to these poems such grandeur and majesty as will in vain be sought for in the poetry of profane antiquity. Examples, however, of this sublimity, derived, as I may say, from the

sacred and divine fountain itself, present themselves in such numbers and variety to every one, that it would be superfluous to point out individual instances: occasionally, however, it is so great, that it astonishes the mind by the very description of the divine greatness, as when Isaiah, who, among the Hebrew poets, stands forth as eminently polished, in chap. xl. 12—26, the better to shew the stupidity of those who worshipped statues made and adorned by human art, exhibits, as it were present to the eyes, the one true God clothed with the most magnificent attributes, and depicts him as so great, that all the nations of the earth are before him as the drop in the bucket of water, or the small particle of dust sticking to the scale of a balance. And in general, indeed, their poetic diction is suitable by the sublimity of its dress to the sublimity of the subject. But, at times, in the very highest sublimity of ideas, nothing can be more simple than the language. An instance occurs particularly in Ps. xxxiii. 9, where the poet, referring to Genes. i. 3, has expressed the incomprehensible power of the Creator the more happily and sublimely by using simple, few, and very suitable words: *He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast.*

Obs. 5. Neither in the Hebrew poets is sublimity in the affections and feelings inferior; nay, indeed, so great is it, that it is impossible in a few words to explain clearly how powerful they are in this respect. And it is not necessary that we expatiate on this topic. For what good minded man is there who, when he reads them, pouring forth their veneration, or confi-

dence, or humble and grateful spirit, or submissive obedience to God proceeding from the emotions of their heart, is not himself so affected as to be almost carried out of himself, and putting himself in their situation, perceives in himself the same feelings as they were actuated by? But although it be in the affections closely connected with religion that this sublimity is principally observable, it is also apparent in certain other feelings, as occasion calls them forth; for most happily do they both express and inspire into their readers, at one time feelings of wonder or indignation, at another of joy or sadness, and at another of hope, or fear and terror. As instances of each of these different feelings are every where to be met with in their compositions, we consider it sufficient briefly to notice two taken from the book of Job, the most sublime of all their poems. The first shall be from the fictitious apparition of a heavenly being, chap. iv. 12, &c., where Eliphaz, that he might persuade Job, miserable as he believed from his own wickedness, that it was necessary that crimes should be punished in this world, as even none of the heavenly inhabitants, guilty of faults, escaped with impunity, feigns that one of these had appeared to him in the middle of the night and declared this to him; by the unexpected vision of whose shape, never before beheld, his whole joints trembled, his hair stood on end, and his voice stuck to his jaws. The second example is of a very different kind, where the poet describing God, consistently with his supreme majesty, indignant at, and displeased with the impious complaints of men daring to find fault with his government, in-

troduces him employing the severest irony, when, as a scholar, he interrogates Job as his teacher, chap. xxxviii. 2, 3; xl. 7—14.

§ 7.

It is also a peculiarity belonging to the genius of Hebrew poetry, that oftentimes a person is so introduced speaking, as that we can only discover this from the context alone; which occasionally adds not a little to the sublimity of the composition. This takes place principally in many of the hymns composed to be sung in public, which are distributed in such a manner into choruses and the different parts of the speakers, which however must be found out from the nature of the poem itself or the arrangement of the sentiments, as that thence admirable force and energy emerges.

Obs. 1. It is not inconsistent with the nature of Hebrew poetry, that the persons who are introduced speaking should be pointed out in explicit terms. As this is oftentimes necessary, so it may be done without injury to the highest sublimity in poems; as, for instance, when the Egyptians, pursuing the Israelites in their passage through the Red Sea, are introduced by Moses as boasting in the most arrogant terms from

the assured hope of victory; Exod. xv. 9. But the poets chose rather to omit any indication of that kind of the persons speaking, where it was not altogether necessary. And as this omission particularly appears in those places in which there is the greatest impetus of poetic language, it so much the more exhibits this impetus, and adds force to it. We have a splendid example of this peculiarity in the 2d Psalm. In the beginning of it, the poet is astonished at the audacity of those who set themselves in opposition to Jehovah, and the king whom he had appointed. Then, on a sudden, he introduces them, expressing openly in language the hostility of their minds. Next, he describes Jehovah enraged, addressing them, and announcing his fixed purpose of establishing that king. The king himself immediately follows, declaring the divine decree. And, lastly, the poet suddenly exhorts these adversaries to learn to become wise in time. This frequent change of persons speaking in this short and sublime poem, requires to be almost altogether discovered from the context alone, which augments very greatly the sublimity of the poem itself. And this custom of omitting the direct indication of the persons speaking is the cause why the poets sometimes, in a continuous poem, without any admonition, assume the person of another, and speak in his name. Of this, to say nothing of Moses, who, in the 90th Psalm, introduces his wretched countrymen, in the deserts of Arabia, speaking suitably to their condition, there is a very remarkable example in the 75th Psalm, which, although it bears the name and possesses the poetic genius of Asaph, does not, how-

ever, suit with his circumstances but with those of King David; the better to persuade whom how he ought to act, when he was now to receive the government of the whole people, Asaph introduces this king himself, as I think after careful examination, speaking and prescribing to himself his kingly duties.

Obs. 2. The frequent change of persons speaking, not pointed out by words, but discoverable only from the context, chiefly occurs in poems to be sung, as we have said, by choruses, or in which there were different persons, to each of whom their different parts were assigned by the authors. And there is no reason for doubting that they, when they delivered to others these poems to be sung, explained the manner which was to be followed in the distribution of the persons; for, had they been accustomed to mark this in words added to the poem, some traces at least of this custom would have somewhere remained, yet although some marks appear in many poems relating to the music, the different parts of the singers can only be investigated and discovered from the structure of the poem and the context, there being of this distribution no other indications. In rightly determining, then, this distribution, as there arises often no little difficulty, we judge it proper, in one or two instances, to make trial in what manner we ought to proceed in this matter, so as to exhibit the genuine nature, force, and beauty of these poems. The distribution of the parts is indeed sufficiently clear and very simple in Psalm cxxxvi., as they were sung at the second founding of the temple, comp. Ezra iii. 10, 11; in each of the verses the latter half consists

of a short commendation of the divine mercy repeated always in the same words, while the former half of the verses forms a continuous subject. These seem to have been sung by a choir of Levites, while the great multitude of the people present answered in the other part to be sung by them : from attending to which it appears that the effect of the poem was powerful when sung on an illustrious occasion, and accompanied with musical instruments, although in other respects not remarkable for its sublimity. Somewhat greater difficulty exists regarding the more sublime 147th Psalm, in consequence of which those who follow the most ancient interpreters are of opinion that it is made up of two different poems. But it appears to us that it is one poem, and by the same author, composed after the Babylonish captivity, to be sung principally by two bands ; the one of which celebrated Jehovah the Lord of universal nature, verses 1, 4, 5, 8, and 9, 15—18, the other celebrated him as the most gracious God of the Jewish nation, verses 2, 3, 6, 10, 11, 19, and 20 ; in such a way, however, that each separately pursued the particular subject of praise which was undertaken to be treated by it. But, besides these two particular bands, we are of opinion that there was also a larger band, who sung a short stanza of praise, which is found at the beginning and end of the poem, and is often repeated, and likewise verses 7, 12—14. But in sublimity, and in the whole disposition of its parts, Psalm xxiv. is greatly pre-eminent, which is a more ancient poem, composed by David with the intention that, as often as the king of Israel should

bring back to Mount Sion the ark of the covenant, after the happy termination of any important war, it should be sung in a solemn manner. While, then, as we believe, the ark was raised from the ground by the Levites, a great band of pious attendants celebrated Jehovah the Lord of universal nature, who was also the tutelar deity of the Israelites, and of whose immediate presence the ark was the symbol, verses 1, 2. During the solemn procession to Mount Sion, on which Jehovah had as it were his peculiar habitation, a second particular band of Levites was demanding, ver. 3, who was worthy to go to so sacred a place. The other band replied, verses 4, 5, that he alone was worthy who was distinguished by the probity of his life and manners, and thus had gained the favour of Jehovah. Immediately the king, singing, verse 6, was pointing to those who, induced by the love of true piety, were accompanying this sacred procession, as deserving of this commendation. Now had they arrived at the entrance of Mount Sion. Then the whole crowd, in sublime language, addressed the ancient mountains and the gates of the citadel, verse 7, and exhorted them to raise their heads higher, that the king of glory might enter. The first band then asked, who was the king of glory? The second replied, that he was Jehovah returning victorious from battle, verse 8. The first band again asks the same question, and receives from the second the same reply, while the ark in the meantime is placed in its own usual habitation, verse 10. If we explain this poem in this manner, so consistent with its genius and structure, it must easily appear how much this

will conduce to showing its sublimity. These examples may suffice as a specimen.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THE POETICAL WRITINGS OF THE HEBREWS SHOULD BE INTERPRETED.

§ 1.

IN interpreting the poetical writings of the Old Testament, one ought sedulously to attend to the peculiar nature of all poetry, whether that of poetry in general, or of Hebrew poetry in particular.

Obs. 1. It belongs to all true poetry of every kind, to magnify and enlarge the things which it describes in various ways, and this takes place also in Hebrew poetry; but, farther, Hebrew poetry illustrates and embellishes one and the same thing with luxuriant images and figures, after the Oriental manner: so that an interpreter, desirous to discover the meaning, ought not to labour anxiously in elucidating each particular ornament, but ought to inquire into the proper employment and force, which, when taken together, they may have had in the mind of the poet. A single example will be of more avail here than any number of precepts or rules. David, in Psalm xviii. 4—17, describes himself as fallen down to the lowest

shades of death, and almost overwhelmed with the waves of destruction, out of which he calls to God residing in the palace of heaven. God hears, and descends inflamed with anger against those who had pushed his friend down into those shades of death. Immediately the whole of nature feels the immediate presence of the highly enraged God. The clouds, loaded with a grievous tempest, carry him down; and, whilst he cleaves the earth to her inmost depths by his thunderbolts, he opens a way for himself to the shades of death, and by his assisting hand stretched out to his friend, drags him out of those waters of destruction to the land of the living. Stripping this of its magnificent poetic dress, which we have only slightly sketched, what is enveloped in it is this:— David when placed in the utmost danger of his life, chiefly from Saul, had escaped unhurt by the favour of God; the greatness of which danger and favour he has so represented by an abundance of exquisite images, as might have on himself in future, and on others, no small degree of power: therefore he would fall into a very grievous error, who should endeavour to adjust with scrupulosity each particular part of the poetic dress to the real events.

Obs. 2. But as the parallelism of sentiments is the peculiar character of Hebrew poetry, this must be most particularly attended to in the interpretation of the poetic writings. In both the antithetic and synthetic parallelism, such as we have described them above, what relates either to the opposition or amplification of the sentiments, neither of which must be neglected in the interpretation of poetry, is not indeed attended

with difficulty. But the difficulty is somewhat greater in treating the synonymous parallelism, a just idea of which was not entertained by the interpreters of former times. For in explaining parallelisms of this kind, it would be altogether absurd and foreign to the true nature of Hebrew poetry, should one try to give a different meaning to these, because he might think that it would be wrong to admit of a tautology in the sacred writers. But it is indeed far from being true that the repetition is useless, although the same sentiments are enunciated in other words. Thus, then, should such a parallelism be looked at by an interpreter, so as carefully to consider what force it has, and what it conduces to the unfolding of the meaning. For instance, in Psalm i. 1, three expressions altogether synonymous occur in its three members, which, when compared together in order to the better understanding of the passage, contain this sentiment greatly illustrated by the parallel expressions, *that he is happy who imitates not the example of wicked men, but labours to become pious and virtuous*. Likewise, also, the opposed parallelism is usefully employed for ascertaining the sense of certain expressions, as in the last verse of the same Psalm, where, because in the latter hemistich, the *way* or the *manner of acting* of the wicked is said to *perish*, *i. e.* to lead to destruction, it thence appears that what is said in the former hemistich of *Jehovah knowing the way of the righteous*, should be understood to mean, that Jehovah looks with kindness on their conduct, and blesses and prospers it. But, to give another example, from which it may appear what advantage may be gained

in interpreting by an attention to parallelism: in Psalm civ. 26, we have long felt offended with the mention of *ships*, where nothing made by the art of man is spoken of, but the divine providential care of created things is the subject of description. In the second member of the verse, those animals are certainly pointed at, of which the sea is the abode that pleases them, and, therefore, some water animal seems rather to be intended, which, among many more, (comp. verses 27—30) is sustained by God; particularly as more clearly in verse 25, small and great animals are said to move in the sea. In such a train of description some small marine animal, which may be opposed to the whale, is alone consistent with the parallelism of sentiments; and we have no doubt that *אניות*, which commonly signifies *ships*, should in this passage be understood of the *Nautili*, marine animals which have a singular resemblance to ships, by which name, too, they are called in Palestine. But the Nautilus, in the opinion of Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* IX. 47, is one of the principal wonders of nature; and the mention of it, in this passage, is exceedingly adapted, both to the subject of the whole passage, and to the strength of the poetic parallelism of the sentiments.

Obs. 3. As the Hebrew poets delight exceedingly in fictions, an interpreter must also have regard to this. He must not only observe where these have place and where they have not, but he must also inquire what truth is intermixed with them: which, indeed, must be determined from the nature of the thing itself. Thus, the brief and magnificent descrip-

tion of the divine apparition, which occurs in Deuter. xxxiii. 2, has been taken from historical truth, or from the apparition of God, which took place on Mount Sinai. But, again, the divine apparition, which is described in Psalm l. 1—6, is merely a poetic fiction ; which, however, is manifestly founded (comp. v. 7th, &c.) on this most important truth : that all external worship is displeasing to God, which is not accompanied by piety and probity of conduct. Regarding other poetic fictions, or the more exuberant images employed for the purpose of representing certain things to the senses, and for illustrating them, there is no need of our saying any thing in this place.

§ 2.

The greater regard that an interpreter pays to the nature of Hebrew poetry, so much the more will he consult the honour and dignity of the sacred writers.

Obs. 1. However much the Hebrew poets are to be interpreted poetically, or consistently with the nature of poetry itself, this presents no obstacle to our most carefully bearing in mind, that we are employed in the interpretation of sacred and divine writings. Nay, even the more an interpreter has a regard to the poetic power of the Hebrews, and so explains their poets, as to bring out clearly their full force by the comparison of passages, where a fit

opportunity occurs, of other poets, whether Oriental, or Greek, or Latin, of the ornaments and images which they employed, and even of those of their fictions which are esteemed mythical, so much the more will he consult the honour of the sacred writers. By this means will he assign to the Hebrew poets themselves their due honour, which will redound to the honour of the whole of the sacred volume, and, provided he approaches them in that spirit with which he ought to be animated, he will, at the same time, perceive in them frequently such sublimity and majesty, as, being never found among any poets of other nations, altogether evinces a very present divine energy, which acted upon their minds.

Obs. 2. And, although these things may be sufficiently clearly seen from those remarks, which we have already made upon the genius of Hebrew poetry, yet we think it useful to observe that a sublimity, worthy of sacred and divine poets, nay, an incomparable majesty, and a something greater than human art, are generally discernible in those passages, in which the Hebrew poets have brought in God as appearing and speaking to man. In this, the introduction of God, in Job xxxviii. and following chapters, is pre-eminient: in the working up of which the author has both reached the highest pitch of Oriental poetry, and does it in such a manner as to seem not to have executed that fiction without the aid of divine illumination. For, whether one looks at the subject of the speech attributed to God, which is some of the more remarkable wonders of nature, or attends to its object, which is, that men contemplat-

ing in astonishment these mighty wonders, should learn to keep within bounds in attempting to bring down the secrets of divine providence to the level of their weak understandings: we shall readily confess, that we can find nothing anywhere among the poets of other nations similar, and that nothing could have been ever produced more worthy of God.

§ 3.

In the first place, we observe, that it ought to be the object of the interpreter of the Hebrew poems, if translating them into another language, to endeavour to express their force as much as the genius of that language will permit: and, therefore, that it is better to keep to the parallelism of the members, than to employ verses arranged according to any metrical theory.

Obs. 1. Although, towards the end of the former part, when treating generally of the manner in which the writings of the Old Testament ought to be translated into another language, we spoke, in particular, of the poetical writings, we, however, by no means account it superfluous to make some few observations, in this place, on the translation of the poetical writings considered by themselves. How difficult, then, it is to translate, so as to merit appro-

bation, poems from the language in which they have been composed into another tongue, those know, who, sufficiently instructed in the knowledge of both languages, and in the riches of their learning, and imbued with a feeling of the power of poetry, have been desirous of making attempts in this way, so as to satisfy themselves and others who were competent to judge in the matter. There is, indeed, in individual languages, such particularly as poets use, something peculiar and proper, whose native force can be with difficulty expressed in another language. There is, moreover, oftentimes in the use, construction, and collocation of words, a something beautiful and full of sweetness or energy, which even the most skilful interpreter can scarcely transfuse into another language. But the Hebrew language is altogether different from the modern languages of Europe, and from the Greek and Latin themselves, and is much more ancient than these. Many things, which, in the poems written in this language, have very great force, are not a little weakened even in the best translation; some again are altogether lost. Whatever, too, in the Hebrew poetry is harmonious, which, at one time, pleasingly soothes, at another hurries along by its impetuosity—can any person ever attain to this in a translation at all times happy? In fine, there are many poetical expressions and images, so remarkably tinged with a foreign Oriental hue, that, in translating them, the most skilful interpreter will find difficulty.

Obs. 2. These difficulties, however, to which we have slightly alluded, ought not to deter any one

who may wish to translate any poetical writing of the Hebrews, from attempting to do justice to its poetic excellence as much as possible. In order to do this he must endeavour, by every means in his power, to understand and thoroughly feel the force of the words, phrases, and whole poetical language; and should then consider in what manner he may best render it into another language, so as that its Oriental complexion may be expressed in as lively a manner as the genius of the language which he employs will allow. But should he fall upon passages which may be justly esteemed in the translation too harsh or strange, or which could not be understood, he should investigate, whether anything less harsh, more agreeable, and more easy to be understood, could be substituted without detriment to the meaning. In all cases, however, he ought to aim at brevity, and should use no more words than are absolutely necessary: and the more practice he shall have had, and the better instructed he shall have been, the more will he perceive that, for the most part, it is possible, without much circumlocution, to represent the poetic force of the Hebrew poems, nay, in a certain degree, to render them harmoniously.

Obs. 3. There have been many attempts at translating the Hebrew poems into verse: and there are many such versions, particularly of the Psalms, both into Latin and other languages. Although to these versions we by no means deny, to some greater and to others less merit and excellence, we would, however, in general remark, that even the best of the translations, made in this manner, depart too much from the

strength and native garb of Hebrew poetry, when clothed in this foreign dress. Greek poems, indeed, although with difficulty, may be turned into Latin verse; in which attempt no one has been happier than our countryman Grotius: but the Hebrew poems cannot, so as to preserve the peculiarity of the poetry, which consists in the parallelism of the sentiments. And should this peculiar character be well expressed in a translation, and in a manner suited to the particular distribution of the members of the sentences, the principal force of the Hebrew poetical language will be preserved in any language. Since then the Hebrew poetry is distinguished by this circumstance from the poetry of other nations, it is evident that Hebrew poems are much more easily, and in a superior manner, translated by a skilful interpreter, possessed of a candid mind penetrated with a feeling of the beautiful, than Greek or Latin poems, which, when translated into prose, necessarily lose very much of their power and elegance; while to translate them well and satisfactorily, into verse, is, in itself, a most difficult task, and has been accomplished but by a very few.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

§ 1.

The book of Psalms holds a distinguished place in the poetical writings of the Old Testament; which, begun to be formed in the time of David, in process of time received very many additions.

Obs. 1. As, from the very earliest ages, the Hebrews were smit with a great love of poetry and music, some of their more excellent poems, which had for their subject a sacred, warlike, or other theme connected with the public weal, seem to have been early collected, and to have been preserved by them in some proper place for public use; which collection of poems was called ספר הישר, *The book of Songs*, of which a fragment occurs in Joshua x. 13, and a whole poem in 2 Sam. i. 18, &c. When, in process of time, another collection succeeded this, called ספר תהלים, *The book of Psalms*, or *sacred hymns* or *songs*, we consider this to have been the cause of the former being lost in after times. As this BOOK OF PSALMS occupies a particularly distinguished place in the poetical writings of the Old Testament, we ac-

count it neither useless nor foreign to our undertaking to notice a few of the principal things regarding it apart by itself, intending, as we do, to treat briefly in another place of the other books which are reckoned poetical.

Obs. 2. This collection of poems has for a long time been often distinguished by the name of David, and properly too, both because he was held to be the author of the most of them, and likewise because he first gave rise to this collection. When he got possession of the whole kingdom of Israel, he thought no duty more sacred than to cause the divine worship to be conducted in such a manner as would have the greatest influence on the minds of other men. For this reason, he greatly augmented the sacred music. And, as he himself, from his early youth, when feeding his father's sheep, delighted in singing in accompaniment with the harp his own religious feelings expressed in poetry in honour of God, and sought his only consolation from this employment in the midst of those distresses with which he had to struggle when persecuted by Saul; and continuing always to delight in the same employment when advanced to the royal dignity; he assigned the hymns, composed for his own use, to that of the public, and afterwards added others, adapted both to the various vicissitudes of his own life, and also to peculiar religious occasions. These were most willingly received by a nation greatly attached to poetry and music; and they were the cause that, both in David's time and very long afterwards, there were persons who, excited immediately by his example, and proposing him to themselves as their model, composed

sacred hymns adapted to the purposes of divine worship.

Obs. 3. Thus, then, in process of time, the book of Psalms came into existence: but the history of this collection, and of the form which it now has, is obscure. We may, however, conjecture with probability, that partly during the life of David, partly soon after his death, his sacred hymns were collected, and this collection terminated with the 72d Psalm, which, as we shall afterwards remark, should be attributed to David as its author; but, in his lifetime, a second collection was begun to be formed, which might contain the hymns of other poets, who had already formed themselves on his model, or might afterwards do so; into which collection seems to have been inserted, both on account of the dignity of the subject, and also, from the ever-during fame of its author, the hymn of Moses which existed only in the more ancient book of hymns, and which, in the order of the Psalms, is the ninetieth; and, perhaps, too, from the same book, the hymn next to it, the 91st Psalm, in which Moses excited Joshua to place his confidence in God. But this double collection, being from the destruction of the state, and the subsequent captivity, liable to its arrangement becoming greatly disordered, may have been the cause why Psalms are found in the former, which have not David for their author, and in the latter those which were composed by him. The whole collection, however, received, from time to time, new additions, so that some poems were added even in the late age of the Maccabees, such as Psalms xliv., lxxiv., lxxix.,

and cxlix, and on what occasion this last seems to have been composed, we have already indicated, Vol. i. p. 61. Besides this most ancient division, there certainly afterwards existed a distribution of the Psalms into four books: the first of which comprehends Psalms i.—xl., the second xlii.—lxxii., the third lxxiii.—lxxxix., the fourth xc.—cvi., the fifth, cvii.—cl., to each of which is added an ascription of praise to God, except to the last book, which a hymn, wholly occupied in celebrating the divine praises, concludes. And as these forms of ascription of praise appear added in the Alexandrine version, they shew that this same distribution had place at the time of making that version, which, perhaps, was not long after their restoration to their country, and the establishment of their worship in the new temple, made with a pious and devout intention, in imitation of a similar distribution of the books of Moses; so that, as these last seem to have been used for the public reading, in like manner the Psalms might be employed with equal care for the public singing.

Obs. 4. Psalms occasionally occur, which, subsequently to these compositions, have afterwards received certain additions. For, besides those, to which we sometimes see a short praise of God added, there are also Psalms, composed in the more ancient times, that were accommodated to the condition of the Jews after the Babylonish captivity, and were, in consequence, enlarged by the addition of some verses: of which the most evident instances are Psalms li. 20, 21, and lxix. 31—37. The xlth Psalm, of which we have treated in Vol. ii. pp. 49 and

50, in its present form, belongs to this class. The condition of the 108th Psalm is almost the same, being partly made up of the lviith 8—12, partly of the lxth 7—14. With regard to the 14th and 53d Psalms, according to the most probable opinion, they are of the same nature as the 18th Psalm and 2 Samuel. xxii., and should be reckoned as hymns twice edited by their author David, with some changes.

§ 2.

The inscriptions of such Psalms as have them, and as far as they regard their authors and occasions, are partly ancient, partly more recent; but of whatever kind, they are, for the most part, to be followed, though sometimes they must be rejected. With regard to those whose authors are not indicated by their inscriptions, we can often, with a degree of probability, make out, from their style and subject, by whom they were composed.

Obs. 1. Very many inscriptions, either in whole or in a great part, belong to the music or manner of singing: of these we have no need to treat, nor of that doubtful word סלִה, which often occurs in the Psalms, and which equally with הַגִּיֵן, Psalm ix. 17, has a reference only to the singers and musicians. We consider it only necessary to treat of those in-

scriptions which principally bear on the interpretation. These, when they indicate the authors of the Psalms, or the occasion to which they refer, are, for the most part, of such a nature, that whether they were added at the time in which, while the authors were yet alive or known, the poems distinguished by inscriptions of this sort were received into the collection of the sacred hymns, or whether these inscriptions were afterwards framed from tradition or conjecture, there is no just cause for doubting of their genuine nature.

Obs. 2. The Hebrew inscriptions of some Psalms have no greater recommendation of their truth, than most of those inscriptions in the ancient versions added, where they were wanting or different in the Hebrew text, through conjecture alone. For a close inspection scarcely permits us to doubt, that the cxxii. cxxiv. cxxxiii. and cxliv. Psalms are improperly ascribed to David. We have also already said, Vol. ii. p. 48, that the inscription of the 30th Psalm is to be rejected as in part spurious. In like manner, we have no doubt but that the latter part of the inscription of the 88th Psalm is spurious, and that Heman, who lived in the age of David, was not its author, but king Uzziah, who, being a leper, and therefore deprived of the kingdom, and shut up in a separate house even to his death, pours out in it his complaint. *Comp.* 2 Kings xv. 5, and 2 Chron. xxvi. 20, 21. Again the 72d Psalm, which bears on it the name of Solomon, seems to us to breathe manifestly the spirit of David, to whom, therefore, we have unhesitatingly ascribed it, Vol. i. p. 76. Be-

sides, among the Psalms which are inscribed with the name of Asaph, such as the 50th and the 73d, with those following on to the 83d, there are some which cannot possibly have a person coeval with David as their author. For Psalms lxxiv. and lxxix. belong to the age of the Maccabees, as we have said in the former §, *obs.* 3, and Psalm lxxxiii. is with probability referred to the war made upon the Jews in the reign of Jehoshaphat. *Comp.* 2 Chron. xx. Unless, then, there were in after times those who bore the name of Asaph, the inscription of three of these psalms ought to be considered as wrong. Lastly, we do not think that the inscription of Psalm lxxxix., in which it is attributed to Ethan, is correct. For he lived in the age of David, but the subject of the poem manifestly belongs to a period long subsequent, and is with probability referred to the overthrow and death of the good king Josiah, an event so fatal to the Jewish state, *comp.* 2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30, and 2 Chron. xxxv. 21—25, and is perhaps the very funeral hymn said in the place of Chronicles quoted, to have been composed on the occasion by Jeremiah.

Obs. 3. There are many psalms with and without inscriptions, whose authors are not indicated. Some of these, if attention be paid to the style and subject, should be attributed to David as their author; such are Psalms ii. ix. x. cx. and many more. We have already conjectured, § i. *obs.* 3, that the 91st may not improbably be ascribed to Moses. It seems to us also probable that the 87th was composed by Isaiah, whose genius and poetic manner it evinces.

But no one needs wonder that there are some Psalms of that kind, regarding whose authors a probable conjecture even cannot be formed.

Obs. 4. We may subjoin a few remarks on those psalms which are each denominated שיר המעלות. Those Psalms from the cxixth to the cxxxivth are distinguished by this title, because, according to the most probable opinion, they had a reference to the return of the Jews from captivity, which, in Ezra vii. 9, is called המעלה, the *ascent*. The subject of them all is certainly of that nature, that they might be aptly sung by the bands of the Jews in different steps of their progress, when going from the place of their exile to their ancient native country, part of them on the road, and part of them when they entered their own land. We doubt not that some of those poems were composed at the time to which they are to be referred from their title; but we think that some of them are more ancient, and accommodated by the Jews to their condition at the time. For the 127th Psalm manifests the sententious style, and also the genius of Solomon, whose name it has in the Bible, as does likewise the one immediately following without the name of its author, with the exception of the two last verses, which have been added subsequently. But the last five of these Psalms also seem to have been composed before the Babylonish captivity: the second of these, and perhaps the first, *i. e.* the 130th, which were to be sung, on the solemn day of expiation, have David for their author: the rest must be assigned to composers not ascertained.

§ 3.

The subjects of the Psalms are many and various, but always connected with religion, and adapted to excite and nourish a sense of it; and their poetic force is, in all respects, admirable.

Obs. 1. Most of the poems of David, contained in the book of Psalms, are suited to the different circumstances of life in which he happened to be, and display a mind full of the deepest feelings of piety: which feelings, likewise, his poems, composed on certain religious occasions, particularly breathe. And, in this respect, all those who were authors of Psalms, carefully endeavoured to conform themselves to the noble example of David: so that it is nothing wonderful that, both by Jews and also by Christians, those hymns have always been had in the higher estimation, in proportion as they estimated more highly religion and piety. Although there are Psalms in which are to be perceived feelings less certainly to be approved, and remarkable for a somewhat too great acerbity in curses and imprecations,^a yet these must be ascribed to the greater vehemence of the affections of the Orientals, and partly to their great poetic impetus.

Obs. 2. But, in respect of the poetry, the book of

^a See, however, on this point, some good observations of Venema, in his Commentary on the Psalms, Ps. cix. Vol. v. p. 719, &c.—*Translator.*

Psalms deserves high commendation, as in it, besides the agreeable variety of subject, no small poetic power appears in all the various authors. David, indeed, is occasionally sublime, but, for the most part, plain, gentle, pleasing, and, at the same time, extremely vivid: and, in whatever condition of a life subject to many vicissitudes he was, he wrote with the utmost facility of poetic composition poems, in which he laid open, in the most undisguised manner, the inmost feelings of his mind, so that, reading his poems, we seem to penetrate to the bottom of his soul. In the other authors of the Psalms, according to their different genius, and the diversity of the times, the poetic energy appears diversely, but, for the most part, greater in those who lived before the Babylonish captivity than in those who lived after it. Yet, however, among these last, there were men who, in their noble attempts, may be justly esteemed to have raised themselves above the genius of their age: and Psalms cii. and cxxxvii., belonging to the times of the captivity, have high poetic merit, as also Psalms cvii., cxxvi., and cxlvii., which were composed after their return.

PART THIRD.

SECTION THIRD.

OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PROPHETICAL
WRITINGS.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE CHIEFLY REMARKABLE SUBJECT OF THE PROPHETICAL
WRITINGS, OR OF THE PREDICTION OF FUTURE EVENTS.

§ 1.

Although the books of the Old Testament, which are usually styled the prophetical, are not always and everywhere employed in the prediction of future events, yet they are most frequently occupied in this theme: and, likewise, in the other books some predictions occasionally occur.

Obs. 1. Christians are wont to reckon those books as prophetical writings, which are designated by the name of the greater and lesser prophets. But, as in

some of these there are some things of an historical nature, so it is far from being the case, that the speeches of the prophets themselves are to be all reckoned as prophecies; for, most frequently, their object is the reprehension of vice, and the recommendation of piety and virtue.

Obs. 2. The Hebrew word נביא, by which a *prophet* is designated, properly applies to an *inspired* person, and is chiefly used of a man who, in treating of religion, shews himself to be acted upon by the immediate influence of the divinity, whether in an ordinary or extraordinary manner; and who recommends to others, not so much, indeed, the observation of external worship, as the internal and nobler feelings of religion, which he himself possesses. From the age of Samuel, therefore, downwards even to the destruction of the state, there were schools in which the youth were early formed to these most valuable feelings. But those who were divinely commissioned to inspire others with these feelings, and were themselves inspired to announce the divine will, whether they were educated in these schools or otherwise, were, in a superior sense, called prophets; and they made the chief point of their doctrine to consist in unfolding and declaring the true genius of the Mosaic religion, as placed in the study of piety and virtue. *Comp.* 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23, and Isaiah i.

Obs. 3. Although, then, it was the chief part of the prophetic office to admonish others in the name and by the authority of God as to their duty, and to excite them to probity of manners and integrity of life, and as, consequently, a great part of what they said

was directed to this point, yet still, from the opportunity afforded by their admonitions, or from some other cause, they were frequently employed in the prediction of future events. And, as the most remarkable subject of the prophetic writings is contained in these prophecies, we consider it proper to treat chiefly of them: and, as some prophecies occur occasionally likewise in the other books, it seems right to consider these at the same time.

§ 2.

We affirm, that there are true and divine predictions of future events to be found in both the prophetic and other writings of the Old Testament, which, however, not a few of the more recent philologers deny.

Obs. 1. For some time back a mode of judging, regarding the prophecies recorded in the Old Testament, has prevailed among many of the cultivators of sacred philology and interpretation, quite different from that determined on, and approved by Christians in every age. These persons hold, that the Hebrew prophets ascribed their oracles to the Deity, in the same way as the diviners of some other nations were wont to do. For they aver, that in the same manner as the ancient Hebrews deemed, that the more remarkable and suddenly arising thoughts of their minds, all the good emotions and affections of

their souls, all their prudent intentions, and, in fine, that whatever they devised either wisely or ingeniously, was suggested to them by divine inspiration, so, in particular, they believed that every presentiment, and divination of the future, was inspired into their minds by the supreme God: that, again, the Hebrew prophets were men of singular perspicacity, and exceedingly attached to their country, who, both easily and with the greatest probability, foresaw what would immediately happen from the state of things which they were contemplating, either to their countrymen or their enemies, and were giving out these their predictive anticipations for the use of others or from the desire of conducing to the public safety, and were frequently also presenting general delineations of remote times, partly wretched to terrify the wicked, and partly most prosperous as a consolation to the good; that the subject of these, so far as they were definite, ought to be referred to the times of the prophet himself, by whom they were delivered, but that those which have a reference to more remote times, and do not contain vague descriptions of future events, should not be held as uttered by the more ancient prophets to whom they are attributed; and, finally, that it is not wonderful should we find among them prophecies which have not been accomplished.

Obs. 2. It would be tedious, minutely, and one by one, to examine and refute all that, in our times, has been imagined regarding the nature of the prophecies which are contained in the Old Testament. It

will suffice for our purpose to notice the chief of them.

1. The present peculiar opinion, then, of very many regarding the Hebrew prophets and their predictions, has a relation to the general opinion of the same persons, which would quite exclude all extraordinary intervention by God from the sacred volume, and refuse its admission into the interpretation of the Scriptures; the rashness of which assumption we have already exposed in P. i. S. i. C. vi.

2. The improbability of the opinion of those who, in order to weaken the authority of the Hebrew prophets, bring forward the diviners of other nations, so as, in any respect, to attempt to put them on an equality, we have already shewn in the place just quoted. For the latter, by their superstitious rites, were most worthy of being ridiculed by all wise and perspicacious men, whilst the former, on the contrary, by their whole manner of acting, manifested themselves to be highly venerable, and the true ambassadors of God, as they said that they were; so that the more accurate the comparison instituted between the two classes and their prophecies is, so much the more clearly will the dignity of the Hebrew prophets shine forth.

3. It must certainly be confessed that the ancient Hebrews ascribed to God every good and right sentiment and feeling as the author; but does it thence follow, that the prophetic discourses were by them ascribed to God in exactly the same manner as they ascribed to him the natural thoughts of their minds? For not again to urge and repeat what we have formerly said, P. ii. S. i. § 7. obs. 2, regarding the general mode in which

the Hebrews were wont to refer all things to God, employing often the same expressions to signify the ordinary and extraordinary providence of the Almighty, we here wish that it be particularly attended to, that the expressions, in which the prophets declare that they spoke in the name and authority of God, are not seldom such as clearly to manifest to a candid interpreter that an extraordinary intervention is intended to be signified. Let particularly be read what Jeremiah, c. i. 4—8; c. xx. 7—12, has testified as the feeling of his mind when vehemently excited by the attendant difficulties concerning the prophetic office which had been committed to him, and it will clearly appear, from these passages, that this prophet represented his office as imposed upon him by the express command of God; and also, that whatever he spoke in the execution of that office, he spoke not of his own authority, but by the direction of God, whom he was bound to obey. And, indeed, by his threatening predictions regarding the destruction of their state, he so much incurred the hatred of most of the princes of the people, as that they laid snares against his life; so that, being thrust into prison, he was, with difficulty rescued from death. But yet, in the midst of his greatest misfortunes, he remained always consistent with himself, and quite certain of the divine origin of his prophecies. *Comp.* particularly chap. xxxviii.

4. There are also some prophecies in the Old Testament not pronounced by any person coming in the name of a prophet, but ascribed to God himself, or to some heavenly messenger or angel. Of this kind are those which Abraham is said to have

received, and which are so connected with his history, as that they can in no probable manner be thought to have been afterwards feigned and inserted into the narration. Neither is the subject of these of such a nature as that Abraham might easily have dreamed of them, or could have thought, agreeably to the manner of the age, that they were given to him by God, had it not been true. Let one only duly consider Gen. chap xvii. 15—21. For there, at a time when Abraham had long given up all hope of having progeny by his legitimate wife Sarah, and considered himself very fortunate in possessing Ishmael, his son by Hagar the maid-servant of his wife, we read that a son was predicted to him to be procreated of Sarah, who was to be the founder of a great nation consecrated to God; and it is related that this prediction seemed so extraordinary to him as almost to exceed his belief. But how little the sacred persons themselves were prone to believe divine revelations, such as were given to the prophets, and how sufficient were their motives for believing them, clearly appears from 1 Sam. iii. 1—10.

5. There are not a few prophecies having a reference to remote times, which are yet neither vague nor indefinite; in which the obstinacy of predetermined opinion alone sees nothing but the fiction of a later age. Among these we may reckon the prophecy given, Gen. xv., to Abraham, somewhat doubting or at least not credulous, regarding his innumerable progeny, and the quite extraordinary circumstances which were most certainly to happen to them long after; and also the memorable pro-

phesy regarding a race untameable as a wild ass, and enamoured of liberty, addicted to continual war, and inhabiting on the eastern quarter of their relations the Hebrews, whose founder Ishmael was to be, Gen. xvi. 12: which prophecy represents, as it were, to the life, the situation, manners, and predatory life of the predatory Arabs, such as in every age they have been, and are at this day. Lastly, To pass by many other instances, what Moses is recorded in Deut. iv. 26—31; xxviii. 49, &c., and xxx. 1—8, to have foreseen regarding the defection, destruction, captivity, and restoration of the Israelitish nation, and their change of mind through a feeling of their most grievous calamities; this defined prophecy was, in a singular degree, fulfilled by the event. But a briefer prediction, of the same nature, is contained in the sanction added to the first and second commandment of the Decalogue, received as of divine authority down from the time of Moses, regarding the punishment of their defection to be inflicted on the Israelitish nation, even to the third and fourth generation; which they certainly underwent during the Babylonish captivity, that endured for seventy years,—for that this is the meaning of that threatening, we have already remarked, Vol. I. p. 299.

6. Finally, It is nothing wonderful that it should happen, that some prophecies should be pointed out which have not been proved by the event. For although in none of them is seen that ambiguity which, more than once, appears to have been aimed at in the oracles of heathen antiquity, there are, however, some whose meaning is difficult to define, both from the

impediments arising from a lofty and obscure style, and likewise from the great length of time, or the unknown or not sufficiently ascertained occasion, on which they were uttered. The explication, also, of many of them is perverted, which is attributable to the fault of the interpreters, who have dwelt too much on the words (*qui in verbis nimium hæserint*), and have not sufficiently attended to their poetic dress, and to the copiousness and variety of the imagery in which they are enveloped. Again, in those which refer to the heathen nations, it is very far from being possible always to compare them with the event, since a great part of their transactions are very obscure, and not easily cleared up, from the defect of historical monuments. Nay, even the affairs of the Jews themselves, which were prophesied of, are not, in every instance, so fully known as to leave nothing further to be desired. There are also some predictions, both regarding the Jews and regarding religion, in which the foresight of the divine mind has comprehended an immense extent of ages, and which, in consequence, can only, as yet, be but in part either accomplished or illustrated.

§ 3.

In interpreting these prophecies, which are delivered in the language of poetry, and, indeed, universally in explaining the discourses of the prophets, which, for the most part, are distinguished by the poetic style, it is proper to ob-

serve the same rules as in the interpretation of the poetic writings of the Old Testament. But, with regard to the prophecies themselves, whether set forth in the language of poetry or prose, particular attention ought to be paid, as much as possible, to their immediate object, and to the time at which they were given.

Obs. 1. It is consistent with the very great love of poetry which pervaded the ancient Hebrews, that, so long as this bias prevailed, the prophets should, in general, employ that style, through which they might hope to make the greatest impression on the minds of those whom, by the divine command, they were instructing and admonishing. And, likewise, the noble affections by which they themselves were moved could not but excite and elevate them, the more that any of them had a genius suited to poetry, in the employment of that mode of composition. This is the cause why the Hebrew prophetic poetry generally belongs to the more sublime species of the poetic style. But particularly when, by the divine Spirit, their minds were rapt into future times, their poetry in general became more figurative and sublime, and assumed, as it were, a greater degree of divine majesty. Consequently it is not wonderful that Moses, in the midst of his prose speech, delivered to his countrymen about the end of his life, whilst representing to them their future condition, rose to

the height of the poetic strain : as we have noticed, Vol. ii. p. 69.

Obs. 2. We are, therefore, of opinion, that all that we have said in the former section, regarding the interpretation of the poetic writings of the Old Testament, should also be observed in interpreting the language of the prophets, when clothed in the poetic style ; and, for this reason, we adduced some examples, when treating of the writings of the poets, from the prophetic writings. It will not, however, be superfluous to illustrate some things, which should be principally attended to, by additional examples.

Obs. 3. The Hebrew prophets, then, in the same manner as their other poets, oftentimes, in their poetic passages, embellish and amplify one and the same thing in various ways ; therefore, consequently, we ought not to dwell on their particular expressions and images, but to observe what belongs to the subject itself, and what to its poetic dress. We have a clear instance of this in Isaiah xliv. 12—17 ; and Jerem. x. 3—5, where both prophets describe the absurd vanity of idols ; and their ornate description, the more it is explained in a poetic way, comparing, also, an almost similar passage of Horace, Sat. I. 8. L. 1—3, the more will it be interpreted, agreeably to the intention of both poets in their admonition to their countrymen. The same mode ought, consequently, to be observed in the interpretation of the poetic prophecies. Thus to give one example, when in Isaiah ii. 12, &c., it is predicted that it would happen that the pride of the Jews, along with their hea-

thenish superstition, would be greatly brought down ; we ought not, in the poetic amplification of this point, to seek after any other import beyond this, that the prophet wished seriously to excite the minds of his countrymen, by placing before their eyes, piece by piece, as it were, their foreseen misfortune, as he poetically imagined it to himself.

Obs. 4. The fictions of whatever sort, which are used by the other poets, are not at all inconsistent with the dignity of the prophetic poetry, when employed even in foretelling future events, but, when rightly considered, have even very great power and force. Of this there is a very celebrated example, briefly, and in part, pointed out by us, Vol. ii. p. 165, from Isaiah xiv. 9—15, where the prophet, predicting the ruin of the Babylonish empire, feigns its king on a sudden thrust down to the region of the dead, at the sight of whom the inhabitants of that place tumultuously arise, and deride, in a very bitter strain, the very illustrious stranger. If we look at the nature and working up of this poetic fiction, nothing can be imagined more daring, more highly embellished, or more exquisite ; and, if we attend to its object, that of representing the greatness of the future deliverance, nothing can justly be reckoned better devised, more worthy of a divine poet, or more consistent even with the gravity of a prophet.

Obs. 5. As, by the poets, God is introduced speaking so as that we must esteem it a mere fiction of a person or prosopopœia, whose import and nature an interpreter must duly attend to, which we have remarked, Vol. ii. p. 163, *comp.* p. 180 : it may be

asked, what idea should we form of the frequent introduction by the prophets of God speaking. Regarding this, then, it seems to us that we should thus determine: that the prophets on all occasions, when admonishing others in the name and by the authority of God, whether they spoke in the person of divine ambassadors, or introduced God himself speaking, announced, amplified, and embellished, what they had to say, each one according to his own genius, and in that manner which was best adapted to the intention of God, and that they spoke by the guidance of God, and agreeably to his mind. In the same manner, then, as the prophet, whoever he was, in the very heavy rebuke and threatening to Eli, the high priest, in 1 Sam. ii. 27—36, should not be supposed to have recited by memory the exact words of God, although writing in prose, why should not the other prophets, who followed and wrote in poetic language, in like manner, and even much more, have very often introduced God speaking, so as either to have expressed his direct mandates in fuller terms, and illustrated them by images, or to have uttered only that which they were justly persuaded was agreeable to the divine will, of which they were the interpreters? Of this last we have a clear example, in Isaiah chap. i., where the language ascribed to God in respect to the fiction, subject, and design, is for the most part exceedingly like to the poetic introduction of God speaking in the 50th Psalm. To the former sort belong chiefly those prophecies, in which God himself is represented as foretelling future events, as in Ezek. xxvi. And to bring another

example of the same sort which is the most usual, and from which, at the same time, it may appear to what a singular degree of sublimity prophetic poetry sometimes rises: Isaiah beholding, through divine inspiration, Cyrus, the future deliverer of the Israelitish race long exiled from their ruined country, and addressing him by name, represents him as immediately present, and God himself speaking to him, exciting and instructing him, and describing himself as propitious to his own people, and, at the same time, as the Lord of all nature and the director of all human things, chap. xlv. 1—8.

Obs. 6. But there is also another thing deserving to be particularly remarked, as peculiar to prophetic poetry when employed in the prediction of future events, which, at the same time, is quite congruent in all respects with the genius of the sublimer Hebrew poetry: that the prophets often spoke of future things as if they were happening, or had already happened, at the time they were predicting them. The Hebrew poets, in fact, when either wishing or expecting any event, by which they were much affected, sometimes, through a sudden emotion, excited themselves, so as to seem to themselves to behold the very event which was the object of their wishes. Thus David, in the 7th Psalm, after having, in those very grievous misfortunes to which he was exposed, implored God to be the vindicator of his integrity, describes him, as in consequence of his earnest prayers, coming as the Judge. Immediately conceiving hope, he threatens his calumniator with instant heavenly vengeance: nay, he sees him

suffering his deserved punishment, and joyfully triumphs in the divine justice. In like manner, Asaph, Psalm lxxiii. which we have slightly touched upon in Vol. i. p. 296, being so exceedingly confounded at beholding the prosperous condition of some wicked men, that he felt doubts regarding the justice of the divine government of human affairs, feigns himself as having entered the holy temple and consulting the divine oracle there. By which, being fully assured of the deceitful happiness of these men, he represents to himself that as having already happened, which was yet to be waited for, so that he confesses that the feelings of his mind were altogether changed by the event. How much more, then, might those who, more divinely instructed regarding future events, and impelled to predict them, call them up, and produce them, as it were, to the immediate view of their own age? These persons, illuminated by divine inspiration, seemed to themselves to be present to those events of which an image was presented to their minds, and to be affected in various ways by the contemplation of them: and consequently did not relate either these events themselves, or the feelings of their own minds with the simplicity of history, and with a composed mind, but described them with all the sublimity of poetry, and with minds highly excited in a manner which was admirably adapted to excite in others those feelings by which they themselves were affected. Isaiah, therefore, in describing the fatal overthrow of the king of Babylon, which was to bring prosperity to the Israelites, not only represents him as present, but sings a song

of triumph, as we have said in obs. 4. We might add many more examples of the same kind, varied in innumerable ways. Two of the more remarkable, however, shall suffice. The one is from Isaiah lxiii. 1—6. There the prophet, foreseeing some dreadful event which was to happen to the Edomites, seems, to himself, to behold one coming from their country magnificently arrayed, and dripping with blood. In astonishment, he asks who he is. He replies, that he is the person distinguished above all for avenging justice and saving power. The prophet again asks, whence it is that his garments are red. On which the other, by images taken from the wine press, describes the slaughter brought upon the Edomites by his avenging justice. There is at the same time in this passage of great sublimity, an example of that custom, by which occasionally the Hebrew poets bring in persons speaking, when they do not point this out in express words: which custom we have noticed in S. ii. C. i. § 7, obs. 1. A second example is in Jerem. xlvii., where, after the prophet had introduced God foretelling the most grievous calamities to the Philistines, he immediately represents to himself the time of these calamities as arrived, and paints the country as desolated in the most miserable manner. He sees the sword of God raging vehemently and long, which, in great agitation, he suddenly addressed, intreating that it would at last cease if it were possible. But, as in this example, Jeremial begins with the prediction of the event, and then represents it as immediately present; so he often does the same thing, as in chap. xlvi. ; and likewise the other prophets, under the higher

poetic impetus of an agitated mind, in which they foretold future events, have described them sometimes as present or past, and sometimes as future, and have interchanged these times among each other. Nay, even the prophets, when they were predicting events which, in part, were to take place immediately, partly at a more remote period, but connected by the nature of their subject, or of the design to which they referred, and were giving out these predictions in a poetical dress, did neither recite the events one by one, nor arranged in the order of time; but presented them to the senses of others, conjoined as it were, in one picture, and painted in lively colours; these predictions, therefore, are not to be contemplated historically or chronologically, but poetically, and can only be distinguished, by an interpreter, from each other by the event.

Obs. 7. As in interpreting the other expressions or longer discourses occurring in the Old Testament, we ought to attend to their design and occasion: these, so far as they can be investigated, should be observed in interpreting the prophecies. Above all, then, should we be satisfied, that never were any events predicted by divine inspiration for the purpose of gratifying the idle desires of men to pry into futurity. The heathen superstition, that cunning inventress of many artifices subservient to this propensity, was indeed favourable to it; but the genius of the Mosaic constitution was altogether opposed to this, although it permitted the consultation of the divine oracle in those more important affairs which seemed doubtful. The general object, however, of

all the prophecies is connected with religion, and was directed to the excitement of piety and probity. But, at the same time, as there is no ground for doubting that in them some regard was had both to the persons to whom, whether pronounced orally or written, they were given, and to the genius and state of the times in which they were uttered ; it is certainly of much importance, in all cases, to inquire into the time in which the prophets, whose prophecies have come down to us, lived, and what was the state of things in their age : for the better that this is understood, so much the more will a correct judgment be formed of the subject and peculiar design of the prophecies, of the manner in which they were set forth, and of the feelings by which their authors were actuated. But, could the time and occasion of all and each of the prophecies be defined, this would be no small aid to the better understanding of them, and to the perceiving of their immediate intention. Therefore, as often as this is ascertained, an interpreter should lay hold of it for his purpose, in order to penetrate more deeply into the very spirit of the prophecy. For, as the divine reprehension, and the prediction of evil to Eli the priest, 1 Sam. ii. 27—36, will be so much the better expounded, and its genius, and the manner in which the prophet pursued his theme, will be placed in so much the clearer light, the more that one shall attend to the too great lenity of the father, to whom the language was directed, and to the very profligate manners of his sons ; in like manner, those things which Haggai foretold chap. ii. 3—9, regarding the very singular glory

which, in future times, would illustrate the new temple, will, if we look to the time and occasion of the prophecy, be understood to have been said with the intention of exciting those who were occupied in rebuilding the temple to take courage, although that house would by no means approach to the external magnificence of the former building: to infuse which spirit into their minds the language of the prophet is admirably adapted. Since, however, in general the occasion of the prophecies is not signified in express terms, the interpreter ought to consider whether any sort of assistance can be derived from any other quarter, for giving a probable indication of it; and although this occasionally may, perhaps, seem to be somewhat of a conjectural nature, we shall endeavour to make clear by examples what advantage accrues from it in explaining some prophecies, when we come to treat of the predictions referrible to the Messiah.

§ 4.

Those visions of which we read, as presented to the prophets, are not to be esteemed as feigned by themselves, although they are accommodated to the genius of each of them, and to the nature of the times. There is, however, in them something similar to poetic images, which, consequently, must be interpreted in a similar manner: and the purpose of these, and of symbolical

actions, was nearly the same—that of representing things more evidently to the senses.

Obs. 1. Down even from the times of the Hebrew patriarchs, certain visions are mentioned, which were, by divine power, presented to the minds of men, sometimes by day and sometimes by night, just as if they had beheld with their eyes certain events which were of importance to be known: it is, therefore, not wonderful that the prophets also had, through the divine power, visions of the same nature given to them for their own use and that of others. For why should we think that those visions were feigned by themselves, who, as divine ambassadors, were wont to ascribe them to God as their author?

Obs. 2. As this divine power did not move the prophets like as if they had been machines, but acted in a way adapted to the genius and condition of each of them, and by no means took away or restrained the action of what are called their natural powers, but excited, governed, and directed them: hence it is, that both in these visions themselves, and in the description of them, somewhat is perceptible that is suitable to the genius of those to whom they were presented, and also accommodated to the nature of the times in which they lived. Most magnificent is the vision, and splendidly described, in a manner also well adapted to affect the mind, which was presented to Isaiah when the prophetic office was divinely conferred upon him, chap. vi. But in a vision having a similar intention, which, after having had presented to his mind, Ezechiel has related in chapters i. and ii.,

less of majesty is discernible, and, in his description, there is a somewhat of languor and minuteness. The cause is, that Isaiah lived while the kingdom was yet entire, and was a person of a highly polished genius: but Ezechiel had a very different genius, and, being called to the prophetic office, when the state was about to be destroyed, was living in exile.

Obs. 3. It is deserving of notice, that visions were presented to the prophets the more frequently by how much later was the age in which they lived: a circumstance, however, quite suited to the diversity of the times. For the more that the ancient vigour of their poetry decayed, and had, consequently, less power on the minds of the Israelites, the more was it the object of divine wisdom to consult, in another way, for the public safety, and, to supply this seeming defect, by representations of events offered to the mind in vision, which might affect the senses in another manner. During, then, the Babylonish exile, as the Chaldeans believed that oftentimes in dreams events were portended and pre-signified, in conformity with this opinion, certain visions recorded in the book of Daniel, were, under the direction and guidance of God, presented to men in dreams. Nay, also, the hand which, during a magnificent banquet that Belshazzar king of the Chaldeans had in a time of the greatest danger unwisely and dishonourably to the God of the Israelites instituted, was seen predicting the immediately approaching destruction of the king and the empire itself in written characters, easy to be read by Daniel alone, as related in chap. v.: this very singular

and extraordinary sort of vision, presented at the same time to the eyes of many, was so adapted to the condition of the times, of the men and the state of affairs, as in an admirable manner to expose the disgraceful nature of superstition, and, at the same time, to display the glory of God.

Obs. 4. With regard to the interpretation of the prophetic visions themselves, it will be sufficient to observe, that, in general, when they are of a more extended nature, the particular parts of them are not so much to be attended to, as what rather they on the whole represent, and what was their intent. Therefore, the visions of Isaiah and Ezechiel, quoted in *Obs. 2*, having the same purpose, but of different characters, so presented the divine mission of both prophets to the eyes, as, at the same time, to excite the highest veneration of the one true God, and to manifest clearly the legitimate and divine authority of the prophets. But of the amplification of the image and its dress, the same judgment ought to be formed as of a more enlarged poetical description of one and the same thing, on which it is not proper to dwell too much. If, indeed, any one vision comprehends more events than one, as *Daniel ii.*, *vii.* and *viii.*, then certainly the case is not the same: but, even then, it is scarcely necessary to observe, that the individual images ought not to be forced, with too scrupulous nicety, to adaptation with the nature of the things signified by them.

Obs. 5. There is some similitude, and that not an unnatural one, between the visions which were presented to the prophets, and the symbolical actions

which they are said to have performed. For the general intention of both of these was, that the things being subjected to the senses, might have a greater influence on the minds of others. As, then, the Hebrews were always greatly moved by things affecting the senses, it was by no means unworthy of the gravity of the prophetic office that the prophets should spontaneously, as it were, represent certain things of which they wished to give more assured information to others by actions, as, for instance, in 1 Sam. xv. 27, 28; nor was it inconsistent with the divine majesty, that actions of a like nature should be directed to be done by the prophets, as in Jerem. xxvii. 1—11. It is not, however, necessary to suppose that all the symbolical actions directed to the prophets were done by them: of which kind we may reckon that of Jerem. xxv. 15—28, who, at the command of God, was to offer the cup of the divine wrath taken in his hand to various nations, which they were obliged though unwilling to drink. As often, then, as these actions are of that nature that they can scarcely be supposed to have been performed, they are to be considered as parables, of which the intention is the same with symbolical actions; and this nature of them is even expressed in direct terms by Ezechieh xxiv. 1—11.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE PROPHECIES RELATING TO THE MESSIAH.

§ 1.

Some of the later interpreters deny that real prophecies are contained in the Old Testament, and, agreeably to this opinion, they hold that the Messiah is nowhere divinely prophesied of, and, therefore, that any idea of this person was nothing but a pious fiction of the prophets.

Obs. 1. It was at one time a very much received manner with Christian theologians, and interpreters of the sacred writings, with the greatest eagerness, to seek to discover him, whom they were wont to designate by the title of the Messiah, wherever it was possible. For, besides that they believed him to be represented in a great multitude and variety of types, they doubted not but that he was primarily signified in all places, in which the words were thought to bear in any way, or lead to, that interpretation: and, in very many other places, where this could less easily be managed, the remote and mystic sense was resorted to; and the more frequently they could lay hold on this sense, the better did they seem to themselves to serve the purpose of confirming and illustrating this most important doctrine.

Obs. 2. A quite different view has very lately been taken of this subject by many. For those who had once determined with themselves, that God never interposed in the cause of religion in an extraordinary manner, were led by this assumed notion both to wrest some prophecies, formerly accounted divine, to a human original, and also to reject contemptuously not only certain types, but, likewise, confidently to deny that the Messiah was anywhere divinely predicted. When, however, by their interpretations they were not able, in every instance, to extrude him from the prophetic predictions, because he was frequently foretold in clear and express terms, they were desirous, by every means, of persuading others that he was nothing else than a fictitious personage, but framed with a pious intention; and this they asserted in such a manner, as if the thing admitted of no doubt in the minds of those endowed with superior perspicacity. They argued, that the notion of a Messiah, that is, of a king, anointed in the name of God, who was, in future times, to come for the complete deliverance of the people, could arise in the mind of no one till after the introduction of the royal dignity: nay, that the expectation of him did not even exist in those times, when, under David and his successor Solomon, such was the prosperity of the kingdom as to leave nothing further to be desired: but, that only at last an occasion for entertaining this expectation offered, after the state was rent into two parts, and each of the kingdoms contained in itself the seeds of its future destruction: but especially, after the kingdom of Is-

rael had already perished, and the destruction of the kingdom of Judah seemed to the more reflecting to be impending, it was that the wish for better times prevailed among all who had at heart the good of their country and religion. That, therefore, the prophets, men attached, in the highest degree, to their country and their religion, greatly cherished this longing; and, both for the purpose of raising the spirits of the people, and likewise to recall them from their fatal perversity of thinking and acting, promised, in the name of God, that what all the best among them wished for, would, in future times, take place, and excited an expectation of a king that should be born of the family of David, who not only would restore their ruined affairs, but would raise them to that height of splendour, such as the most prosperous state of their empire, in which it ever before was, could not exhibit any image of; that the prophets so luxuriated in extolling the greatness of this expectation, in order to move others more efficaciously and conformably with their pious intention, that whatever Hebrew poetry could bring together, that was splendid and magnificent in describing either the endowments, virtues, and deserts, of this new and incomparable king, or the prosperity, greatness, and perpetuity of the empire which he was to found, the purity and excellence of the religion of his most singularly excellent reign, and its very great and quite peculiar blessings in all respects,—all this they eagerly and piously applied for this purpose: and, consequently, formed to themselves such an idea, both of a prince and a government, as was merely ima-

ginary, and never, in fact, was either ever verified, or will hereafter be verified.

§ 2.

We are induced, by the strongest reasons, vehemently to condemn this opinion regarding the Messiah, and the prophecies which relate to him.

Obs. 1. The character of the Hebrew prophets marks them out to be men who ought not to be reckoned *cunning*, or, if a milder term is to be preferred, *pious* guessers at future events, but as truly divine ministers; consequently, in predicting a new and illustrious king, they ought to be esteemed as commissioned by the authority of the supreme God, and actuated by his influence. We do not deny that these men were often inflamed with the love of their country and religion, and were excited to inspire their countrymen with the hope of better times, and to embellish that expectation by lively poetical images: but nothing was more abhorrent from their character, than that of soothing the minds of other men by false or fictitious expectations. On this point the example of Jeremiah, quoted Vol. ii. p. 201, supplies a very fit instance; who, having several times predicted the immediately impending destruction of the Jewish kingdom, incurred the hatred of so many, that it was with difficulty that he escaped being put

to death : yet he never showed himself inclined to imitate those who, assuming the dignity of prophets of God, were promising nothing but peace and safety ; but, although wishing with his whole soul that things would turn out to their wishes, he continued to appeal confidently to the event, being quite assured of the divine origin of his ill-boding prophecies. See Jerem. xxviii. 5, &c. The same prophet also, when he gave a hope of a return from their captivity, and of the restoration of their country, did it, not because it was agreeable to himself to anticipate so great felicity, but because it had been made known to him by God that this thing would take place at a definite period ; in like manner, therefore, we rightly conclude, that when he, as well as many other prophets, prophesied of the Messiah, not only at other times, but particularly in his chap. xxxiii. 14—16, he by no means formed this expectation of himself, but was taught it by God.

Obs. 2. There is something in the opinion, which we here reject, when narrowly inspected, so singular and so utterly remote from all probability, as that it could only have been devised by those whose determination was obstinately settled, of denying every extraordinary intervention of God. For was there ever any nation, whose prophets indulged for a long space of time in any such pleasing hopes, and held them out so seriously, and on such repeated occasions, with a most earnest endeavour and wish to persuade others of their divine truth ? And yet, by those men with whom we are here contending, the Hebrew prophets were accounted very grave and

highly venerable persons, who were under the most powerful feelings of religion, and whose unwearied endeavours were directed to promote the true interests of their countrymen! Is it then becoming to ascribe fictions of this sort to such men, which, had they been brought forward by heathen prophets, would deservedly have been ridiculed? You will, however, say, that they had not the same occasion for similar fictions. But, indeed, these prophecies of the Hebrews are of such a nature, that, after their Oriental dress and poetic embellishment are stripped off, they affirm something that would most assuredly happen in future times, which, were it a fiction of human invention, no one of those who announced it could have persuaded himself that it would ever really come to pass. What, too, shall we say of Daniel, who, without any poetic grandeur of style, in simple prose language, also prophesied similar things of the Messiah, in his exposition of certain dreams and visions, chap. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14; and likewise fixed even the time at which he would come, chap. ix. 24—27. But, putting aside even these prophecies of Daniel, those alone, regarding which there is no controversy as to their subject and authors, are so unique in their kind, and so destitute of every similitude to the heathen models, that, unless pronounced by divine authority, they seem to deserve to be placed in the class of absurd and altogether incredible monstrosities of imagination.

Obs. 3. In fine, the invariable custom of Jesus, whom we venerate as the Messiah, is altogether opposed to this new opinion regarding the prophecies

respecting the Messiah; as he, on every occasion which he judged to be proper, professed himself to be that person whom the prophets divinely foretold, and wished to persuade his private disciples, the immediate ministers employed by him for announcing his doctrine, particularly after his resurrection from the dead, that it was altogether necessary that whatever things the prophets had predicted concerning the Messiah should happen to him agreeably to the divine will. But if the delineation of a Messiah afterwards to come, be a fiction of human piety, and not a work of divine origin; then, at the time when the expectation of this person as just about to appear had filled the minds of all, and when Jesus, descended from the family of David, which was almost extinct, was desirous of founding a new religion common to all nations without distinction; in these circumstances, he either deceived himself, really imagining that he was the person indicated by the prophets, or most opportunely seized on that general expectation, that he might the more successfully accomplish his most excellent design. Admirable suppositions truly! For then either he, who conjoined a mind and soul of stupendous greatness, with the utmost simplicity, mildness, and gentleness of manners, who introduced a doctrine both of incomparable excellence, and of humanity and love unheard of before, and whom, filled with veneration we look up to as a singular model of the most perfect virtue, must be transformed into a sort of fanatic, who having rashly, however usefully, fully persuaded himself both of a divine promise and mission, can scarcely be vindica-

ted from some degree of insanity, or must be accounted the contriver of a most impudent imposture, which no character for piety or consciousness of a noble intention can easily excuse.

§ 3.

Admitting then the prophecies of the Messiah to be true, we by no means deny that this very suitable appellation is of more recent origin, but still we have good grounds for holding that the promise of this person was made by God from the most ancient times.

Obs. 1. It appears with the greatest certainty, that, generally under the title of Messiah, *i. e.* of king, a person highly illustrious, and descended from the race of David, was predicted by the prophets, and that this title, after the external form of the royal dignity was at last introduced among the Israelites, was usually applied to him. But this title will be esteemed the more suitable, the more its true notion is understood, and the better its genuine import is perceived. The king of Israel, then, was always called Messiah, משיח or the *anointed of God*, as, being consecrated by the authority of Jehovah, he was holding his place in a nation separated for the sake of religion: and since the purpose of the theocratic government in this nation was the upholding of true religion, this was therefore to be particularly attended

to by the Israelitish kings: consequently David the distinguished establisher and vindicator of this religion, merited to be called, *a man beloved of Jehovah*, 1 Sam. xiii. 14. Therefore no one after the Israelitish kings, who were the vicegerents of Jehovah their supreme king, could be called by this title, but he who was to come in behalf of the true religion, and with much greater power, and in a much fuller sense, was to reign in the place of God to the greatest advantage of religion itself, and to his highest and eternal glory.

Obs. 2. But although generally he, whom the prophets announce as to come divinely commissioned for the salvation of man, is described under the title and dignity of a king, his delineation is not circumscribed by this one idea. For Isaiah, chap. xlii. 1—7, and xlix. 1—6, prophecies of him as a divine and extraordinary teacher of religion, far superior to common prophets: and Jeremiah, chap. xxxi. 31—34, has represented this religion as new and different from the ancient Mosaic one. Nay the former prophet, who is very frequently employed in the sublime contemplation of the Messiah, has assigned to the same person something peculiar to a priest, but which is unique in its kind. For in chap. lii. 13—15, he forsees him about to sprinkle many people with his blood, while he must be reduced to the most abject condition, before he should be raised to the highest pitch of glory: and this he afterwards, in his 53d chapter, enlarges upon and illustrates. That, indeed, in this chapter the Messiah is treated of, Isaiah himself is thought to have not obscurely indicated to us, as in ver. 2d. he com-

pares him to a tender shoot, which unobservedly and lowly springs out: by which comparison he had already, in chap. xi. 1, designated the Messiah the son of David. This chapter, indeed, some recent interpreters choose rather to explain in a forced manner, than to allow it to relate to the Messiah simply, whom according to them the prophet could never have represented to himself as in a most wretched condition, and exposed to death itself.

Obs. 3. The use of the name of king or Messiah, by Isaiah, and the succeeding prophets, as applied to some peculiar son of David, is anterior to them, being employed by David himself in this way and meaning, to whom the Holy Spirit had revealed, how great honour was reserved to the family of him, who had been elected in the room of Saul to the royal dignity in perpetuity. Therefore in 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7, he celebrated him in the highest strain of enthusiasm, not as the ruler of one nation, but of אדם, or the *human race*: and he distinguishes the same person in Psalm ii. 2, 6—9, by the title of Messiah, king, and vicegerent of God, whose future empire would be most extensive and powerful. Nay, in the 110th Psalm 1—4, he magnificently describes him as the associate of the divine power, and at the same time as a priest by the decree of God himself. It is besides worthy to be particularly remarked, that in both Psalms, whose language can apply to no human king, the Messiah is described as attacked by powerful enemies, but to whom he rises superior which idea David in Psalms xvi. and xxii. so enlarges and illustrates, as to express the same thing partly in

other words, as Isaiah does in his 53d chap. Lastly, not to collect more instances on this point, David, in Psalm lxxii., which we have already said, S. ii. c. iii. § 2, obs. 2, should be ascribed to him as its author, attributes a power and empire to the future Messiah, such as cannot be applied to any Israelitish monarch, verses 5, 7, 11, 17 ; and in this last verse, as he evidently refers to the divine promise given to Abraham in Gen. xii. 3, and xxii. 18, as we have already hinted in Vol. i. page 76, that happiness, by the interpretation as it were of David himself which was to redound to all nations from the descendants of Abraham, was to be expected under the empire of the Messiah. There appears a still greater likeness of that Abrahamic prophecy with this exposition of David, as it seems impossible to doubt, that after the words *בן* *מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָרֶץ* should be added *וַיְתַבְּרֶנּוּ בּוֹ*, to which addition we are led, both by the structure of the sentence, the right distribution of its members, and by the authority of the Alexandrine version.

Obs. 4. Since, then, long before the prophets who prophesied of the Messiah by name, he, whom they designated by this title, was divinely predicted and set forth, as invested with the dignity of a most excellent prophet, and most beneficent priest, as appears from any candid, plain, and truly consistent mode of interpretation—why should not the same person be intended by Moses in the prophet like to himself, that is, the founder of a new religion, Deuter. xviii. 15 ; the deliverer of men rendered wretched through sin, promised to our first parents, Genes. iii. 15 ; and presigned, too, by certain rites having a

reference to the purification and expiation of sin, respect at the same time being in part had to his more distinguished merits? We have already, P. ii. s. i. § 2, obs. 7, stated what is our opinion of this typical mode of interpretation.

Obs. 5. But should it be asked, by what indications are the prophecies relating to the Messiah, to be distinguished? We say that this must be chiefly done by attending to their nature. Regarding very many of them, in which a certain king of the race of David is predicted in terms such as are used respecting no ordinary prince, there is no difficulty. Again, from these passages, in themselves sufficiently clear, others that are less perspicuous, may receive a light which may be conducive for investigating and defining in a satisfactory manner, their subject. Wherefore, as in *Obs. 2*, we have referred Isaiah liii. *compare* xi. 1, to the Messiah; so likewise consistency of interpretation leads us to refer to the same person, Is. vii. 14, although it be difficult to explain the peculiar object of making mention of the Messiah in this passage. For he who is there predicted as a child to be born of a virgin, and distinguished by the peculiar title of Immanuel, or God about to appear among men, is so described in chap. ix. 5, 6, as seems to afford some explanation as it were, of this title; and in chap. xi. 1—9, is prophesied of as one who would arise from the almost extinct family of David. And since the prophet Micah, v. 1—3, who lived in the age of Isaiah, foretold that the Messiah would come and be born in Bethlehem, he seems in this place to allude to that rather obscure prophecy.

From having defined the subject of these more recent prophecies, should they be accounted of divine origin, we are entitled to conclude, that those more ancient passages, all such as may be best understood of that illustrious person, or of his fates, or the benefits he conferred, and which admit of no other probable interpretation, are justly to be referred to the same subject; and we have already in part seen in *Obs.* 3d and 4th, how far this mode of comparing goes.

Finally, we are very far from denying, that in this matter of which we are treating, there belongs to Jesus himself, the Messiah, to his Apostles, and to the writers of the New Testament, some weight and authority. Although all the passages of the Old Testament, which are applied in the New Testament to the Messiah, are not immediately to be interpreted as if the writers were really speaking of him; nor even where any thing in the New Testament, taken from those more ancient writers, is said *πληρουσθαι*, is it always meant, that the event was in ancient times looked for or had respect to. We are, therefore, particularly desirous here, that what we have observed in Vol. i. pp. 266, 267, regarding the use of the New Testament in the interpretation of the Old Testament, should be attended to: and the interpreter, wherever he may observe that any passage is immediately referred to the Messiah, should, with the most prudent and anxious care, inquire, whether the passage can, in any probable way, be explained as belonging to that theme. Oftentimes, indeed, the evidence of this most noble subject, forces itself upon

us. But sometimes it is not so evident, but shrouded, as it were with some dark clouds, which are not very easily dissipated. And our own experience has taught us, that it cannot always be brought out clearly; and this we shall now briefly show in one instance.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the words in which 2 Sam. vii. 14, God is thought to have promised to David, by Nathan the prophet, regarding the future King Solomon, that he would be to him a father, and that he should be to him a son, are expounded of the Messiah; which, after the most careful consideration, we are satisfied, is done consistently with the intention of the divine prophet. For, when promising by divine authority to David, that the royal authority would be established and perpetual in his family, he had not respect to Solomon alone, but to all the successors of David, of whom the author of the 89th Psalm, ver. 31—35, understood the passage, and consequently, to him in particular, who alone was to establish an everlasting kingdom. Therefore, what God said regarding a gentle chastisement^a of these successors of David, could only, from the very nature of the thing, have a reference to those of them who should merit chastisement. But the expression, in which God affirmed, that he would be to them a father, and that they should be to him sons, pertained to them all without distinction, as those who held the place of God in the theocratic government, instituted for the sake of religion. But, at the same time, it pertained in all its strength, and in quite a

^a See Appendix.—*Tr.*

singular manner, to that most illustrious of all the successors of David, whom David had celebrated not long before in the 2nd Psalm, as one who was to be the Son of God in a distinguished manner, and to whom he himself even principally referred the promise regarding the perpetuity of the royal dignity, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7. But regarding the subject of this last prophecy and of that Psalm, we shall have an opportunity of treating in the following §.

§ 4.

In the prophecies regarding the Messiah, something adapted to the nature and condition of the times is always observable.

Obs. 1. It is right to assign that object, which all prophecies connected with religion, had in every case to the prophecies referrible to the Messiah, because there are no others more nearly connected with religion. From the very intention, then, of God, they have this use, that they render those who believe in the divine origin of the religion contained in the books of the sacred code, more assured that they were proved by the event in Jesus Christ; and consequently, that there is the closest connexion between the old and new doctrine, since the former was given by God to prepare for the latter. No one, however, will attain to the true meaning of most of these prophecies, unless he explain them with all possible

diligence and prudence, conformably with the genius and state of the people and the times. But should we propose to pursue this subject particularly, so as to be adapted to the necessities of the age in which we live, in which a new mode of interpreting these prophecies, and one rejected by us, is prevalent, we should be led into too long a discussion. We shall therefore attempt briefly, and at the same time perspicuously, adducing also examples, to set before the reader what seems to us chiefly deserving of attention in this very extensive and most important subject.

Obs. 2. We begin with the times which preceded David: and that the first prophecy of these times regarding this matter occurs in Genesis iii. 15, we feel the less and less doubt the more we transfer ourselves, as far as may be, into the exact state of the founders of the human race. They were, indeed, full grown as to their bodies, but in mind, knowledge, and understanding, were mere children. They had violated the divine command not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree, and had laid all the blame on the serpent, by whom they had been enticed. God, then, after he had shewn to them some punishment inflicted upon the serpent, mitigated the severity of the evils which he denounced on them and their posterity, by the promise to them of one who should be born long after of the woman, and should at last trample under foot the serpent, that hated and unceasing enemy, and the author of all their evils. In this promise, it seems to us that we see a most wise and gracious parent accommodating himself to the un-

derstanding of children fallen into transgression, and excusing themselves as far as they could, so as to make them perceive how wrongly they had acted, and at the same time to enable them to form to themselves a notion of his fatherly clemency and goodness, such as their narrow and very limited perspicacity was capable of. Regarding, however, this whole relation, accounted by very many as mythical, see vol. ii. pp. 103 and 124.

We take next the promise given to Abraham, of the happiness which his posterity was to bring to all nations, the nature of which we have shewn in the former §, obs. 3. Whether or not Abraham understood, in some degree, the extent and excellency of this promise, we do not dare certainly to determine: although, should we assume that something farther regarding this matter was afterwards laid open to him, who enjoyed a familiar and friendly intercourse with God, we should only assume what in itself has a similitude of truth, and is recommended by the very weighty authority of Jesus, John viii. 56. Certainly, as it is consistent with the wisdom of God, that he should not altogether conceal from the founder of the race that distinguished happiness, which he had destined for mankind, through means of a certain person who was to be born of that race; so likewise the manner in which the promise was made, was exceedingly apposite to the state and genius of Abraham. For it was first made when he was called from his native country, Genesis xii. 1—3, and repeated, confirmed, and somewhat enlarged, after he had shewn his faith and obedience in a most difficult trial, Gen. xxii. 15—18.

Lastly, that the prediction of Moses, Deut. xviii. 15, (which in § 3, obs. 4, we have referred to this subject,) of a prophet like to himself and the author of a new doctrine to be born among the Israelites, was received by him from God, he himself testifies in verses 17—19 of the same chapter; and he also speaks of this prophet in such a manner as to signify, not obscurely, that he was to be one greater than himself. This title of a prophet, too, was in itself exceedingly proper, as Moses was himself a prophet: it was too becoming the divine wisdom, that something regarding the future founder of the new religion should be made known to the founder of the ancient one: and Moses, in a very opportune manner, communicated to his countrymen that prediction, when admonishing them not to listen to false prophets: and he likewise so conjoined it with a description of the very great dread which arose in their minds on the terrible confirmation of his own authority at Mount Sinai, as that it might thence be concluded that the new prophet would appear in a less terrible manner, but yet was not to be despised with impunity. Therefore, this prophecy is justly applied to Jesus, Acts iii. 22, 23; vii. 37.

As to what remains: we do not wonder that from Moses to David there occur no prophecies of this person, as little occasion offered for them. But, indeed, that greatest of all the benefits which he was to bring with him, the expiation of human transgressions, was adumbrated by various suitable rites and ceremonies, so that the taking away the guilt and baseness of sin, which was afterwards placed in the clearest light by the founder of the new religion, was constantly, so

far as possible, subjected beforehand, as it were, to the senses of the Israelites. *Compare* Vol. i. pp. 197, 198.

Obs. 3. Since the author of this great salvation was to arise from the posterity of David, regarding whose advent, as one belonging to the chosen race, both Abraham and Moses had been informed by divine oracles; it was also fitting that David, after he had been consecrated to the royal dignity, should be divinely admonished of his coming. As then the prophet Moses described him as a prophet like to himself, although much superior, so likewise it is not wonderful that king David represented him under the equally suitable title of a king like to himself, but yet far more excellent. Consequently, we doubt not but that, after the ark of the covenant was brought to Mount Zion, and he had received by the divine prophet an assured promise of the royal dignity being perpetual in his family, 2 Sam. vii., immediately a most illustrious king to be born of his race occurred to his mind, such as he has celebrated, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7, as we have already said, § 3, *obs. 3.* Regarding the very suitable title of this prophecy, see Vol. i. p. 231. But we are not of opinion that it was on this occasion that he first began to think of the Messiah. For the promise was of such a nature, as easily to excite anew, and strongly to confirm that idea which had already arisen in his mind, but not such as to inspire it at first. Therefore, we do not assume rashly that it was presented to his mind, enlightened by divine revelation, not long after he had been secretly anointed by Samuel the servant of God, to the attainment of the royal dignity.

Having then established this point, let us take a little closer survey of those Psalms of David, which in § 3, *obs.* 3, we have referred to the Messiah: regarding which, we above all remark, that the author had often in his own circumstances occasion for composing them, and of substituting himself, as it were, in the place of the Messiah, so as to seem to speak both of him and of himself at the same time. For although we altogether reject the fiction of a double sense, we admit, however, that analogy between David and the Messiah, which arose from the occasion of his prophetic poems, and which, when prudently considered, conduces not less to their illustration than their poetic nature, of which we shall treat separately.

1. Since then David, when king elect, would revolve in his mind both the exalted dignity destined for him by God, and the very weighty duties in consequence imposed upon him, and the very great evils which he had to fear from Saul before he should attain the object of his wishes, he had a most fitting opportunity of putting on, as it were, the person of the Messiah, who, rejoicing in his own dignity, and bound to aid in the advancement of religion and virtue, would, through confidence in God, with a steadfast mind, go through the most instant dangers; and would not doubt that, delivered from the power of death, to which he was exposed, he would be restored to a life of the most felicitous enjoyment, Psalm xvi.

2. When the unhappy event proved the justness of that foresight which David had of the evils impending over him from Saul, and when in the most earnest manner that monarch was seeking his destruction, he

was then affected in such a way, as under the guidance of the spirit of God easily to substitute himself into the dreadful condition of the Messiah when near to death, Psalm xxii. He therefore took from his own state such circumstances as he judged most congruous to the suffering Messiah, and at the same time, impelled by a divine energy, presented to himself a picture of him as of a man subjected to the most cruel punishment, struggling with death, and surrounded with fierce enemies: but on a sudden beholds him not disappointed in his expectation, but most happily delivered from all his evils, dangers, and adversaries, and greatly rejoicing in the distinguished blessings to be conferred on all nations.

3. David, in the 110th Psalm, sets forth almost the same thing, but in a very different manner from that in which he had predicted it in each of these Psalms. This indeed was composed when he was in a different condition. The very style proves David to be its author: and indeed there is something so singular in his history who was king of all the tribes, as that from him alone what is principally obscure in the poem, the union of the sacerdotal and royal dignity, can be illustrated. We read for example, in 2 Sam. vi. 12—19, that the ark of the covenant was brought in sacred procession to Mount Sion as its permanent habitation by David, while he himself acted as priest both in his dress, in offering victims, and in pouring out devout prayers for the people. This was at the same time an occasion of a nature highly fitted for cherishing David's confidence for the wars which he had yet to accomplish. In such a state of things then, imagining

to himself the condition of the Messiah partly similar, but much more exalted, he addresses him as superior to himself, and rehearses a divine prophecy regarding his supreme majesty and most extensive empire, in which an assured victory is promised to him over all his enemies : nay he beholds him in the midst of an innumerable sacred multitude, clothed with the sacerdotal dignity, which he was consequently to conjoin with the royal dignity, and that too by the decree of God for ever.

4. How great and full of danger were the wars at this time impending over David from the surrounding nations, and of which mention is made in 2 Sam. viii. and 1 Chron. xviii. may be gathered from the 60th Psalm. Whilst preparing himself therefore to administer these, he appositely represented the Messiah to himself as a divine king, whom his enemies attacked in vain, and to whom God destined in the 2d Psalm, an empire superior to any human empire both in majesty and extent. In this Psalm then, which we hesitate not to ascribe to David as its author, he forms to himself an idea of the Messiah, such as was most congruous with the situation of his own affairs, just as in the former Psalms we have adduced.

5. The 72d Psalm, which we think was composed when David ordered Solomon his son to be anointed king, *compare* 1 Kings i. 32—40, is of a different sort. On this memorable occasion then, when the promise of the royal dignity being perpetual in his family easily occurred to his mind, which promise at the same time had confirmed to him the hope of the

Messiah afterwards to be born of his posterity, David seemed to himself to see him inaugurated into his kingdom. And in consequence he depicted in lively colours the reign of the Messiah, which he partly took from the commencing reign of Solomon.—The more that we compare this poem with the 45th Psalm, the more probable will it seem to us that it was composed by David, when he saw Solomon, in consequence of his command, settled in the royal dignity: so as that anew he celebrated the Son, who was to arise in future times, in some respects similar to his first son who was a king, but at the same time infinitely superior, and clothed with divine majesty. Therefore, he indeed took some things from the state of affairs such as he had delivered them to Solomon, and which he hoped would be made better by him, but partly also he had the Messiah before his eyes, such as he had formerly described him in the 110th Psalm.

Obs. 4. We are now come to those predictions of the prophets concerning the Messiah that are more recent: and on this occasion we shall consider it sufficient to remark generally on what may seem principally deserving of notice.

1. After the kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the same calamity, it was to be feared, would some time happen to the kingdom of Judah, occasionally some sad and dejecting anxieties were naturally springing up in the minds of pious and good men, as to what would at last happen to that nation which God had chosen as sacred to himself, and with regard to the splendid promises which he had given to David: of which anxieties and solitudes we have an example in the

89th Psalm, which we have already noticed in S. ii. c. iii. §. 2. obs. 2. Therefore from that period the divine wisdom took care that there should be frequent prophecies principally directed to allay these anxieties: which consequently might establish the most assured expectation that God would, whatever might happen, not only not desert his people, but would even in future times raise up that highly illustrious son of David as the author of a noble and incomparable salvation. And it is consistent with this, that promises of this kind should be several times repeated and confirmed after the destruction of the kingdom of Judah.

2. It was agreeable to the nature of those times, in which either misfortunes were impending, or very great ones in existence, that the promised Son of David should mostly be represented in the manner which would either alleviate the dread or feeling of these evils, or compensate for their magnitude. Therefore, in describing the majesty of the Messiah, and the prosperity and greatness of the empire which he was to possess, the prophets made it their principal object to excite and raise up the depressed spirits of their countrymen.

3. Since this which we have stated, was generally the occasion of most of the prophecies regarding the Messiah in the age of the prophets, we need not wonder that these were often intermingled with other predictions inspiring hope, which, so far as regarded the times and events, were by no means connected. These were, in truth, conjoined together with the view of presenting the pleasing image of happier

times: and by this delightful subject, adapted to cherish and strengthen hope and confidence in the constancy and kind care of Jehovah, they had in them something which, neglecting the order of time and events, rendered them easily conjoined and presented to the mind together.

4. The nature of the prophecies which Daniel gave forth regarding the Messiah, is very different, being more definite, and arranged in a certain just and correct order of time, even of the foreign events: which difference is without difficulty explained, from the circumstances of the prophet. For he was in general discharging some civil office under foreign princes, to whom the Jewish exiles were successively subjected, and played no small part in the administration of foreign affairs. But he was also beholding very great vicissitudes in the empires which succeeded each other, which could not but excite his greatest attention, and which contained in themselves the causes of other changes in the progress of time. Therefore, he was desirous both of administering to the consolation of his countrymen, and, at the same time, of considering and declaring in the various vicissitudes of foreign nations, the admirable administration of the supreme governor of human affairs; with a pious feeling of which how much he was affected, he himself has sufficiently manifested in chap. ii. 20, 21. Agreeably, then, to his own circumstances and genius, he has prophesied under divine instruction in such a manner, as even in his predictions concerning the Messiah, to have very particularly distinguished himself from all the other prophets.

§ 5.

It is right, in expounding the prophecies regarding the Messiah, that, when they are delivered in poetical language, the rules which are to be followed in prophecies of every kind of subject clothed in a poetical dress, should be observed.

Obs. 1. As in interpreting the poetical predictions regarding the Messiah, it was formerly the practice to dwell the more particularly on the words and images, in proportion as the theme seemed more important and more closely conjoined with the Christian religion, in consequence of which these prophecies were rendered the more difficult of explanation: it will not, certainly, be superfluous to look at these by themselves, that we may see in what manner they are to be prudently and candidly explained, as respects their poetic nature. But there will be no need to dwell long on this subject, though of very wide extent, since the principal things which we formerly said, regarding the poetical writings of the Old Testament generally, or regarding the prophecies distinguished by their poetical dress, may easily be applied to this subject.

Obs. 2. As, then, the Hebrew poets amplify and illustrate the subject of which they are treating, by

various images, and the prophets do also the same thing in their poetic predictions of the future; consistency of interpretation requires, that where we have a poetic prediction of a Messiah to come, the subject of the prophecy should, so far as possible, be separated from its poetic ornaments. *Compare* S. ii. c. ii. § 1, obs. 1, and S. iii. c. i. § 3, obs. 3. In doing this, however, the interpreter must act with much prudence, for, occasionally, the context brings us to believe, that by different words, phrases, and images, something different in signification is intended: as, for example, when the Messiah is distinguished by various honourable titles, Isaiah ix. 5, or when described as suffering in a dreadful manner, Psalm xxii. 13—19. But should one be disposed to interpret the poetical amplifications of one and the same thing, and to consider each one of them as referring to as many different things, he would be forgetting that he is employed in expounding a poet, and that too, an Oriental one; who, that he may make the greater impression on the minds of others, sometimes, by the splendour of his images, exaggerates in an astonishing manner what has been presented to his own agitated mind. There is a very remarkable instance of this in the highly adorned description of the kingdom which the Messiah would, in after times, establish, Isaiah xi. 6—8. Here we are not solicitously to inquire, what the fierce and cruel, and what the tame and gentle animals, signify. For the prophet, desirous of describing poetically the pacific genius of that kingdom, such as it had been divinely represented to his mind, laid hold of whatever things were most contrary in

their nature, and united the whole in one picture as it were, in order to represent to the eye a thing remote from the senses. The mythus here supposed, by not a few late interpreters, framed agreeably to the fiction of a golden age which existed in the primæval times, we do not allow, as no such fiction occurs among the Hebrew poets. There is, to adduce no more, another example, though not quite of the same kind, in the 45th Psalm, whose subject we have already noticed in § 4, obs. 3, towards the end. In the 9th and following verses of this Psalm, David paints a most illustrious prince returning from a successful war, received with exultation and splendour at home, and bringing along with him many princesses descended from royal ancestry, among whom one was distinguishedly eminent, whom the victor chooses as a wife to himself. The richest and most flourishing neighbouring nations, in consequence, court the favour of the queen; and she brings forth many and worthy sons to her spouse. Which representation, worked up in the luxuriant Oriental manner, signifies nothing more in the mind of the poet, but the great and incomparable splendour of a kingdom, to which, even the most celebrated nations were to be subject.^a

Obs. 3. This poetic desire of subjecting things to

^a After careful consideration, it appears to me, that, on the contrary, this last part of the 45th Psalm is to be explained by St. Paul's comparison of the union of Christ with the church to the matrimonial union, Ephes. ver. 25—32; which opinion is much strengthened by the admonition to the Queen (the Jewish people, as the mother of the Church) in the 11th and 12th verses of the Psalm.—*Tr.*

the senses, caused the Hebrew poets to take the expressions and images, by which they adumbrated the future affairs of the Messiah, from present circumstances. He is therefore often described as being to found his empire in Zion, in which, indeed, both David, whose son he was to be, had his palace; and Jehovah, in whose stead he was to reign, had his sacred temple; but that this is to be understood figuratively, appears from Isaiah xi. 9, where the security and safety which it is said would be in the whole sacred mount of God or Zion, is also described as diffused far and wide through the earth, because existing everywhere from the knowledge of the true God or religion. And we may take the opportunity of adding, that in the same prophecy of Isaiah xi. 10—16, after foreign nations had been described as subjected to the empire of the Messiah, the Jews themselves, dispersed over the whole earth, are prophesied of, as to be subjected to the same empire, and to live happily under it; in which prophecy, images are taken from the various nations from which they had ever suffered any evils, and also from the different Israelitish tribes, the evils inflicted by which had been most fatal. Lastly, this observation also illustrates the cause, why David more than once borrows expressions, feelings, and images, apposite for representing the Messiah to himself and others, from his own circumstances, and sometimes from the condition of his next successor, Solomon; consequently, in comparing these with the event, it is not proper to dwell too much on each of these in particular.

Obs. 4. As we have seen, C. i. § 3, obs. 6, that it

is not repugnant to the nature of the more sublime Hebrew poetry, for the poets to describe things future, as if they were present, or had already happened; we therefore need not wonder, if the things which respect the Messiah should, although remote, be in the same way brought as it were under immediate view. Such then is the nature, both of other prophecies, as well as of that in which Isaiah, c. liii. describes the Messiah who was afterwards to come as despised, rejected, given up to punishment, and sacrificed like a piacular victim, but afterwards happily restored to life; and seems to describe this, not as what was to happen long afterwards, but as what he had seen with his eyes.

Obs. 5. As likewise from such, and so great a poetic impetus increased by divine inspiration, as that by which the prophets were hurried to the nearer contemplation of future things, it easily happened that they were led to conjoin, and in some degree, mix different things, and represent them as it were in one picture, as we have seen in Vol. ii. page 211: hence it is that more than once, both the coming of the Messiah, and the return from captivity, and other things besides, not cohering in point of time, are closely conjoined by the prophets. Micah iv. and v. affords an example.

Obs. 6. Lastly, that introduction of persons speaking, which often occurs among the poets, and consequently in their prophecies, is occasionally, by the prophets, employed for their purposes, when foretelling the Messiah. Instances of this are to be found in passages of the 110th, and also of the 2nd Psalm, whose

poetic nature we have delineated in Vol. ii. page 172, and in the whole of the 16th and 22nd Psalms. In each of these poems, David assumes the person of the Messiah, *compare* § 4. obs. 3, so as to introduce him speaking, without giving any notice, just as we have seen, Vol. ii. pp. 172, 173, the person of David assumed by Asaph in the 75th Psalm. And, in like manner, Isaiah on a sudden introduces the Messiah in chapter xlix. 1—6.—This poetic introduction of the Messiah ought then to be explained by a candid interpreter, so as not to inquire too subtilly into each of the expressions or feelings attributed to this person, in the same manner as if the real Messiah himself had spoken, but every thing should be expounded consistently with that poetic mode in which the prophet has represented him.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE DIFFERENT WRITINGS OF EACH OF THE PROPHETS.

§ 1.

Among those whom we call the greater Prophets, Isaiah is the first both in time and in excellence of poetic power. This person received the dignity of prophet in the year in which Uzziah died, and exercised it for a very long time, and

to him we hesitate not to ascribe the authorship of the whole book which is commonly called by his name.

Obs. 1. It now remains that we should view separately the prophetic writings : in the contemplation of which, mindful of our object in reviewing each of the books of the Old Testament in succession, we shall be able to be more brief, from having, as we think, already discussed many things that ought to be attended to by an interpreter employed on these writings.

Obs. 2. Although there are in the Old Testament prophetic books somewhat anterior in point of time to ISAIAH, we however begin with this prophet, as being first in the order of time among those prophets whom, when we regard the size of their books, we are wont to denominate the greater prophets. From his 6th chapter, in which he has described his calling to the prophetic office, it is rightly concluded that he was installed by divine authority into this dignity in that year in which Uzziah died, when the kingdom of Judah seems to have been in a very flourishing condition : and that he was still performing the duties of that office in the time of Hezekiah, is apparent from his 39th chapter.

Obs. 3. Besides certain historical parts, of which we have spoken in Vol. i. p. 149, different prophetic discourses are contained in the book of Isaiah, which are not always arranged in the order of time in which they were delivered and spoken to the people of

the kingdom of Judah. Among these there are very many prophecies, some of which refer to the Jews, some to certain foreign nations, and some to the Messiah. There is perceivable in the poetic style of these, an admirable cultivation and polish, and at the same time often such a poetic impetus, and such a distinguished sublimity and majesty, as that none of the prophets can in every respect be accounted very similar to Isaiah. And, although from the 40th chapter to the end of the book there appears some difference, as there is occasionally less poetic power, and the subject is for the most part more cheerful and full of hope and consolation, it cannot, however, be denied, that every where an exquisitely cultivated genius appears: and the whole of this diversity may be easily explained and understood, if we suppose that these discourses were composed by Isaiah when he was very advanced in life, and after he had foretold to Hezekiah, chap. xxxix. 5—7, the overthrow of the kingdom, and the exile to Babylon.

Obs. 4. This manifest equability of poetic diction has not, however, prevented very many philologers and interpreters of the present day from rejecting, as not belonging to this author, some other prophecies, and particularly those contained in the book of Isaiah from the 40th chap. to the end, and to consider the whole book as got up after the Babylonish captivity, and to be accounted a prophetic anthology as it were, the greater part of which is due to Isaiah, but to which were successively added the predictions of certain other prophets, almost in the same way as the book of Psalms contains the hymns of David and other poets, and the

book of Proverbs the sententious sayings of Solomon and other wise men. Some sort of probability would indeed be assignable to this analogy, were there only one prophetic book remaining, as there is only one book of Psalms, and another of Proverbs. But there are many prophetic books, and each of these distinguished by the name of its author, and among these one of Obadiah of very small extent, in which there is only one prophecy: Why then, at least, was it not added to the larger anthology? But that the prophecies in the 40th—56th chapters are to be attributed to a time posterior to the conclusion of the captivity, is an opinion which we cannot, indeed, see how it is to be reconciled with the purity and elegance of style which are conspicuous in them. Nor can we conceive that a Jew of so late an age, after the language had so greatly degenerated, and the genius of the people was so very different, could have so completely insinuated himself into the age and genius of Isaiah, as in so many continued discourses never once to have betrayed the taste of his own times. Again, according to this opinion, all these discourses are not to be reckoned among the number of prophecies, but are merely poetic descriptions, for the most part of present events. Thus the author occasionally feigns himself to be, as it were, a prophet of future times, and consequently wished his descriptions to be held as prophecies uttered long before; as for instance, when in chapter xlv. 21, he ascribed to God himself, as foretold by him in long bygone times, what he had said of Cyrus, the minister of God in delivering the Jews. And this very definite mode of prediction is the cause

why they hold that these prophecies were framed after the event: regarding which opinion, see above, C. i. § 2, obs. 2. Lastly, to omit other things, that which they are continually repeating, that Isaiah, according to the received opinion regarding his book, often predicted the return of the Jews from captivity, but that such predictions cannot be his, because he did not predict the captivity, is both rashly and falsely assumed; for Isaiah, in c. v. 5—9, and vi. 11—13, pointed not obscurely at the destruction of the state, and in xi. 11, had a view to the approaching exile and dispersion of the nation, and in xxxix. 5—7, foretold to king Hezekiah himself definitely, and in express terms, the ruin of the kingdom, and the subsequent exile to Babylon.

§ 2.

The prophet Jeremiah, to whom is rightly adjudged the book which bears his name, and who is also the author of the book of Lamentations containing poems composed upon the destruction of the state, lived in the last times of the kingdom of Judah, and survived them. Compared with Isaiah, his poetic diction is less polished, but at the same time distinguished by its peculiar poetical virtues.

Obs. 1. JEREMIAH, when a young man, was called to the prophetic office under the reign of Josiah,

and was still performing that office when Jerusalem was destroyed, and the whole people led away into exile. See Jeremiah i. 1—7. The prophetic book which is ascribed to him, is without controversy his, excepting only the 52d chapter, which we have already said in Vol. ii. p. 149, seems not to be attributable to him. It contains, besides certain histories, prophetic discourses delivered to the Jews, containing predictions of their future affairs, both immediate and more remote, and also various prophecies having a reference to some foreign nations. But the fact, that in the Alexandrine version of this book, whatever may have been the cause, the prophecies have been arranged in a very different manner from what they are in the Hebrew text, makes no difference to the integrity of the book itself, which, in all its parts, and without any one calling it into doubt, manifests Jeremiah to be its author.

Obs. 2. Jeremiah is indeed far inferior to Isaiah in that splendour of language for which that prophet is eminent: he has even an appearance of negligence and redundance, such as may be well imagined from the more unhappy times in which he lived, and from his very difficult and unpleasant circumstances. The nature of this redundance will be understood, by making a particular comparison of his c. xx. 14—18, with Job iii. 3, 4, 10, 11, which he has there imitated. Being of a very gentle disposition, very much distressed by the hardship of the times, and very prone to a feeling of grief and pity, he has generally an inferior degree of sublimity in his style: although in circumstances which affected greatly his mind, he not

unfrequently assumes a higher tone, and manifests a great power of poetic diction, and that, too, of the sublimer kind, which, indeed, he principally shews when foretelling evils to the enemies of his nation, in the contemplation of which there was nothing which could excite his gentler feelings.

Obs. 3. The LAMENTATIONS, which are also manifestly the composition of Jeremiah, manifest in almost every part this more tame poetic genius and redundancy of words, although occasionally rising to greater sublimity. They contain five poems, in arranging which, an order not altogether correct as to time is observed. For, as it seems to us, the first chapter has a reference to the siege of Jerusalem a short time after its commencement, *Compare Jerem. xxxvii. 5—10.* The third chapter was composed somewhat later, and in it Jeremiah complains principally of his own circumstances, *Compare Jerem. xxxviii. 1—13.* Chapter fourth belongs to the time when the Chaldeans had broken into the city, *Compare 2 Kings xxv. 1—5. and Jerem. xxxix. 1—5.* Chapter second describes the dreadful state of the taken city, temple, and inhabitants. Lastly, the poet, in the fifth chapter, introduces the surviving Jews in their ruined country complaining of their afflicted state, *Compare 2 Kings xxv. 22, and Jerem. xxxix. 9, 10.*

§ 3.

Ezekiel, along with king Jehoiakim and many other Jews, was carried into exile to Babylon, be-

fore the destruction of Jerusalem, and there published various discourses, in which he employed a style somewhat approaching to the Chaldaic model. In the description of things he is very diffuse and singularly accurate: and when he writes in the poetical style, he excels all the Hebrew poets in a certain kind of luxuriancy constructed with the greatest art.

Obs. 1. From comparing 2 Kings xxiv. 15, 16, and Ezek. i. 1, it appears that EZEKIEL was one of those who were exiles in B abylon, carried away along with Jehoiakim some time before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Every thing therefore which, from the time of his being clothed by God with the authority of a prophet, he put forth in writing, was written in exile. His discourses relate partly to the then present state of the Jews, partly to the events which were to happen to them either in a short or more remote time, partly to certain foreign nations: and as he was living in a country possessed by the Chaldeans, his style has contracted somewhat of a Chaldaic tinge. What, however, is peculiar to him is, that he has employed the greatest pains in a most diligent and almost minute description of things. He has, even in those passages which are poetical, bestowed the same pains. Consequently, he has neither the majesty nor the polish of Isaiah, nor the softness of Jeremiah, but he is so ingenious and fruitful in a highly adorned and accurate elaboration of images,

so copious even to luxuriancy, and has shewn such an ardour in pursuing, perfecting, and completely accomplishing his purpose, that none of the Hebrew poets has in this point equalled him, although in that sublimity of feelings which seizes on and carries along with it the mind of the reader, he is much inferior to the other poets.

Obs. 2. There have been only a very few, who have thought that certain parts of the book, which has been by the general opinion wholly attributed to Ezekiel, are not his, particularly the visions described in chap. xl.—xlvi. ; being induced to the adoption of this opinion chiefly by their remarkable obscurity. But in these, the same genius of style manifestly appears as in the other parts of the book, and also the same proneness to the greatest accuracy of description. The obscurity there observable is not, however, of such a nature as to have any force in establishing this opinion, as a not dissimilar obscurity is perceivable in other passages of this book. But with regard to the subject and intention of these visions, it seems right to suppose that they were shown by God to the prophet, and that the restoration of the city, temple, and their sacred and civil constitution, at no remote period, which in process of time would become most flourishing, was represented by certain added symbolical images: the contemplation of which communicated by the prophet to the people would consequently fill their minds with cheerful hope. And we are of opinion, that the very form and appearance of the temple was given, with the intention, that the Jews might conform themselves to it in building the new sacred

edifice, as far as the times would permit : but should they not be able immediately to perfect it, that the prophet wisely and piously wished to attribute this to the iniquity of the nation, which had brought ruin on their former state, and whose fatal effects they could not expect not to experience in the commencement of their new state. See chap. xl. 4, and xliii. 10, 11.

§ 4.

Greatly different from those prophets of whom we have spoken is Daniel, carried away, while yet a youth, along with some others of the principal families, a little before Ezekiel, and advanced to the highest honours successively in the Babylonish court : whose style is prose, and generally very unadorned. His book, written partly in Hebrew of little purity, and partly in the more ancient Chaldaic language, contains no prophetic discourses, but some very singular notices (*notationes*) of histories, dreams, and visions : but this, however, does not prove agreeably to the opinion of many, that either the whole or part of the book should be justly esteemed as supposititiously put upon Daniel.

Obs. 1. It appears from Daniel i. 1—7, 17—21, and ii. 48, that already, under the reign of Jehoiakim,

the father of Jehoiachin, certain noble youths, distinguished equally by the superiority of their genius and beauty, had been carried off from Judea to Babylon by order of Nebuchadnezzar, among whom was DANIEL, who was educated in the language and learning of the Chaldees, early admitted to court, and finally exalted to the highest rank.

Obs. 2. With this situation of Daniel the style of the book is quite congruous. The whole of it has something of a foreign air, such as argues the author a Jew by nation, but educated by foreigners. Again, from Aramæan habits and language, to which Daniel was accustomed from his youth, he was rendered less capable of the poetic style. See above, Vol. i. p. 47. Besides, as neither the Aramæans, nor the Chaldean nation, were in any degree distinguished by the more elegant cultivation of genius, and as Daniel, by his civil functions, was bound to labour at the attainment of an accurate description of things, hence in his whole book no small care of such exactness is perceivable, without any aim at superior elegance of style. Lastly, we can easily understand, in the writings of such a man, the employment both of a more impure Hebrew and Chaldee style, in which last there is somewhat of the Hebrew language intermixed, which is not observable in the later Chaldee writings.

Obs. 3. Although, however, the style of the book which the Jews attribute to Daniel be such, as will seem the more suitable to him the more we attend to his circumstances; yet there have been persons, who on account of what is singular in the whole nature of

the book, or in its subject, have judged that either the whole book, or at least some of its historical chapters, ought not to be attributed to Daniel as the author. For the book, say they, is written partly in Hebrew and partly in the Chaldee language : it contains histories exceedingly opposed to every appearance of truth, and, in the symbolical predictions of the future, seems by far too definite. And it appears, that on account of this very accuracy, the prophecies of Daniel were bitterly attacked by PORPHYRY ; and there are not wanting some moderns who assert, that the principal events which happened to the Jews down to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and his persecutions of them, were written after the event, and published under the guise of prophetic visions shewn to Daniel. But, as we have already, Vol. ii. pp. 150, 151, treated of the historical parts of this book, and the diversity of language observable in it, we consider it sufficient briefly to remark here, that the condition of Daniel, under foreign princes, was not such as to lead us readily to expect discourses similar to those of the other prophets, nor such the perspicuousness of these prophecies, as to argue them not to have been framed till after the event ; that the visions were very much adapted to the age of Daniel and of the nation, in which, as a youth, he had been educated ; that the splendid and eternal empire of the Messiah to be established in future times had, too, been more than once predicted by him ; and, lastly, that something is observable in the very subject of the prophecies suited solely to the condition of Daniel. *Compare*, C. i. § 4,

Obs. 3. C. ii. § 2, obs. 2, near the end, and § 4, obs. 4, at the end of this Section.

§ 5.

Of the lesser prophets, Hosea, Amos, and Micah, are among the most ancient : of whom the two former began to exercise the prophetic office a little before Isaiah, and the last was coeval with him : each of whom deserve no little commendation of their poetic powers.

Obs. 1. Hosea holds the first place in the order of time, so far as can with certainty be determined among those prophets, who are generally denominated the Lesser, as we find him discharging the prophetic office during the reign of Uzziah. Almost coeval with him was Amos. Micah flourished somewhat later, but was however possessed of the prophetic dignity in the time of Isaiah. This appears from the beginnings of their several books, which are justly ascribed to them as the authors.

Obs. 2. The prophetic discourses of HOSEA particularly refer to the kingdom of Israel, partly, however, to the kingdom of Judah, but never to foreign nations. The prophet is more employed in admonitions than in the predictions of the future. Except the 1st and 3d chapters, in both of which, either by symbolical action or parable, is represented and described in prose the very base defection of the Israel-

ites, the rest of the book is in poetry, the poetic diction of which is redolent of antiquity, and highly sententious, but frequently rather obscure.

Obs. 3. AMOS, who from a shepherd became a prophet, manifests in his style the kind of life to which he had been accustomed, and from which he has taken most of his images : but, however, neither in describing the visions which he had, nor in any other subject, is he either low or poor, but often full of imagery and sublime. His discourses refer to both kingdoms, but chiefly to that of Israel, and occasionally to the kingdoms of some of the neighbouring nations.

Obs. 4. MICAH is far more lofty and vehement than either of these prophets, approaching, in fact, in power of poetic style to Isaiah, whom he seems to have proposed to himself as his model. His discourses equally refer to both of the Hebrew kingdoms : and contain some interjected prophecies also respecting very remote times, and even the age of the Messiah.

§ 6.

Jonah, Joel, Habakkuk, Nahum, and Obadiah, are of a less certain age, some of them being apparently more ancient than the others : in most of them, however, distinguished poetic power is manifested.

Obs. 1. It is not indeed certain, but very nearly so, that JONAH, to whom a place is assigned among

the Minor prophets, was the same person as the son of Amittai, who, in 2 Kings xiv. 25, is mentioned as a prophet in the kingdom of Israel: his age is therefore supposed to be anterior to all the others who are contained in the collection of the prophets. The subject of the book which is ascribed to him is rather historical than prophetic, as it relates what took place on the occasion of the reproof which was directed by God to be administered by Jonah to the very flourishing, but highly corrupted city of Nineveh. The language of the book is therefore almost all prose, except that there is in the 2d chapter a poem composed by the prophet at a time when in the greatest danger of his life, which is not quite destitute of sublimity.—There is only one opinion as to what is the greatest difficulty in this book, but the attempts at solving it have been of widely different kinds. But, indeed, even from the earliest times of Christianity, the story particularly regarding the immense fish, by which Jonah, when thrown into the sea, was swallowed, and in whose belly, whether dead or alive, he remained three days, and was finally restored to life after he was cast on the shore, has seemed to exceed the bounds of credibility.—As then the book can scarcely be interpreted according to the rules of true history, that opinion seems to us the most adapted to protect the honour of the Sacred Scripture which we have partly stated, Vol. ii. p. 61:—that it is a moral parable, the very important object of which was to teach, that Jehovah had a most wise and benignant care of even the other nations; that the occasion of this parable was derived

from the history of Jonah, the Israelitish prophet, wishing to escape from the divine command regarding the Ninevites, and, in consequence, exposed in his voyage by sea to the greatest danger of his life; and that the poem, in which he celebrated his deliverance from so great a danger, is the composition of Jonah himself. Lastly, after the most careful consideration, we are much inclined to the opinion, that the whole book, as it now is, may be attributed to Jonah as its author, who at last, deeply convinced of the divine providence towards other nations, and desirous of persuading his countrymen of the fact, clothed in the veil and imagery of parable what had a reference to this, and had happened to no other prophet, that it might have the greater effect on the minds of the Israelites.^a There

^a How inconsistent this conversion of the story given in the book of Jonah into a moral parable is with Pareau's own reasonings against the mythical interpretation of scripture, must be evident on the least reflection. It is in fact adopting and sanctioning that mode of interpretation which he had altogether condemned, and whose evil consequences he had so forcibly pointed out.—But where is the difficulty here? Is it, as the author seems to have felt, that we are unable to explain a miraculous event accomplished by the power of God, by shewing that it might have happened in the natural and ordinary course of things? Could not God *prepare* a fish with a throat sufficiently large to swallow whole, and a stomach sufficiently capacious to have contained the body of a man? Could he not have preserved the life of that man without the intervention of atmospheric air and the act of respiration? Does man live by bread alone, or by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God? The question here simply is, does the writer of this book relate, in plain simple language, an event as taking place by the inter-

is something peculiar in his style, which may be derived from the place where he was born. He belonged to the tribe of Zabulon, as appears from 2 Kings xiv. 25, compared with Josh. xix. 10—13.

vention of divine power, *i. e. miraculously*, without the slightest intimation that he is speaking figuratively or parabolically? There is not, it is believed, in the whole book, the least hint or circumstance, which can be construed into such an intimation.

It is to be observed then, 1. That the event related, containing in itself no contradictory circumstances, is within the power of God. 2. That the object, which is well indicated by Pareau, intended to be answered, and which, were this the place, might be much more fully illustrated, was sufficiently great and momentous to render necessary a miraculous divine interference, both to subdue the prejudices of Jonah as to the nature of the errand on which he was sent, and also to justify him in the opinion of his countrymen for acting as a prophet to a foreign nation. Compare the divine conduct to Peter, as related in the book of Acts, and his justification of himself, when sent to Cornelius in a case not dissimilar. 3. That the reference by our Saviour, Math. xii. 40, to this as a true history of a miraculous event, must be decisive in the mind of a consistent Christian.

It may be proper to observe here, that the author has attributed by far too little weight to the writings of the New Testament in the interpretation of the Old Testament, both in regard to the passages quoted by the New Testament writers, and to the explanation given by them of circumstances, and of the object of things, which we find in the Old Testament. This is by far too extensive and difficult a subject to be treated in a note: but it may be of use to observe, that, *after a person has satisfied himself of the divine origin of the scriptures of the New Testament, i. e. after he has become a Christian*, undoubtedly no interpretations of the Old Testament will be relied on by him with so much certainty as those to which, after the due application of the rules and cautions of criticism, he has been led, by the aid and guidance of the New Testament; and assu:ed.

Obs. 2. Although in the book of JOEL nothing is said regarding the age of the author, yet the exquisite purity of the style, and the power of the poetic language, convinces us that we cannot place him posterior to Hosea. For he is particularly elegant, terse, and sublime, admirable in description, and excellently fitted for affecting powerfully the mind in various ways. The whole of his book seems to us to be but one continued discourse, in which the prophet, after having described the future destruction of the state, by images taken from a calamity brought upon the country by locusts, for which was afforded probably in his time some sad opportunity, goes on to foretell the restoration of his country, and the times afterwards to follow, sometimes prosperous, sometimes calamitous, and the highly felicitous age of the Messiah to come in later days, all so conjoined, and even mixed, as to be represented, as it were, in one picture for exciting the pious affections of his countrymen. *Compare* above C. i. § 3, obs. 6, at the end, and C. ii. § 5, obs. 5.

Obs. 3. At what time NAHUM, a poet of the most sublime and daring poetic spirit, lived, cannot be with certainty determined. But it seems probable to us, that he lived at the time of Hezekiah king of the

ly he will not rashly conclude, as too many have done, that every thing which he cannot reconcile in the writings of the Old and New Testaments arises from misapprehension, mistake, or error in the writers of the New Testament. The doctrine of quoting passages from the Old Testament, by way of accommodation as it is called, seems also to have been carried too far, if it be not altogether a mistaken one, as I am inclined to believe.—*Tr.*

Jews, when the affairs of the Assyrians were in the most flourishing state, and that Nahum seized the opportunity of the proud speech of the Assyrian general, when he demanded the surrender of Jerusalem, 2 Kings xviii. 17—35, to prophecy the future overthrow of the Assyrian empire, as a consolation to the Jews: in which subject the whole book is employed.

Obs. 4. Some time afterwards HABAkkUK seems to have lived, at the period when the Chaldeans, from having broken the power of the Assyrians, were themselves become exceedingly powerful; whom in consequence he describes as very terrible, chap. i. 6—11. And, indeed, a calamity, which was hanging over the kingdom of Judah from that people on account of the remarkable perversity of the Jews, is the subject of his first chapter. Afterwards, in chapter ii., the prophet also foretold the destruction of these enemies of the Jews. And he subjoined a poem in chapter iii., in which he expresses the different feelings of a mind much agitated by the things which had been presented to it by God. The style of this poet is splendid, lofty, and magnificent.

Obs. 5. There is only one short prophecy of OBADIAH extant, relating to the Edomites malignantly triumphing over their relations the Jews, when they had been subdued by the Chaldeans, and in part driven away into foreign countries, and when immediate destruction was impending over Jerusalem itself. *Compare* verses 11—14, and 20. From this it may be made out at what time the author lived. He possesses the greatest fervor of language, but comes

not up to the poetic excellence of the more ancient prophets.

§ 7.

The age of the prophets, who remain to be spoken of, is sufficiently determined: for Zephaniah lived under the reign of Josiah: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, after the Babylonish captivity: to none of whom, consequently, great poetic praise is due.

Obs. 1. The beginning of the book written by ZEPHANIAH shows, that he prophesied when Josiah reigned over the Jews. He is employed in predicting the destruction of the kingdom of Judah, and the subsequent captivity, and in reprehending those vices of his countrymen by which they would deserve that calamity. But, at the same time, he, by divine authority, threatens evils to their enemies, and promises afterwards better times to his own people. In poetic power and elegance of language, he is not, however, to be put on an equal footing with the more ancient prophets.

Obs. 2. After very many of the Jews had returned to their country, and had begun to build the new temple, HAGGAI the prophet spoke those discourses, *compare* chap. i. 1, 2, in which he exhorted them to carry on the work with alacrity, and foretold that that house, though inferior to the former, would,

however, in one thing, in the appearance of the Messiah, be far more illustrious. He also touches on other matters which related to the Jews. His Hebrew style verges towards the Chaldaic, and although not destitute of vigour, has little poetic excellence.

Obs. 3. Coeval with Haggai in the Babylonish captivity, was ZECHARIAH, whose discourses contained in the first eight chapters principally relate to the immediate affairs of the Jews, and in particular to the commenced rebuilding of the temple. The second part of the book embraces prophecies, which must be referred to the times of the Messiah. The language is partly prose, chiefly in the former part of the book, which is particularly employed in describing symbolical visions ; partly, however, it is poetical, but not very sublime, nor much polished or adorned ; yet, however, such as marks a writer of no vulgar genius, who, not altogether unsuccessfully strove to free himself from the impediments of his age, and from the rudeness of the Chaldees : which attempt appearing in both parts of his book, shews that there is no good ground for some of the moderns denying that the latter part of the book was written by him.

Obs. 4. The last of the prophets of the Old Testament is MALACHI, as in his discourses the temple is spoken of as quite finished. He is principally employed in reprehending his countrymen with regard to those things which seemed both to him and Nehemiah, not to be approved of in them, when restored to their country. *See for example*, chapter ii. 10—16.

and *compare* Nehem. xiii. 23—30. Occasionally, however, rapt into futurity, he also predicts the Messiah that was to come. His style is redolent of later times, and where it has any thing in it poetical, it is not deficient in a certain degree of force, but evinces that poetry had almost expired.

PART THIRD.

SECTION FOURTH.

OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL
WRITERS.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY OF THE HEBREWS.

§ 1.

Although the Hebrews, during the whole period in which the writings of the Old Testament were composed, did not treat of philosophy as a particular part of learning, there were, however, occasionally some among them, who might be in some measure supposed to have cultivated the thing itself which is generally called by that name.

Obs. 1. The word φιλοσοφία, by which is signified the *study of wisdom*, began to be used by the Greeks

after the age of Pythagoras, as those who before that time applied themselves to the contemplation of things, were named and held to be σοφοί or *Wise men*; as Cicero, *Tuscul. Quæst. v. 3*, tells us. At first this study among that people was directed chiefly to the origin and causes of things, or to political wisdom. Afterwards, however, the science began to be more accurately defined, and to embrace a wider circuit, until at last it came to be distributed into three principal branches: the first of which was called *Physics*, which investigated divine and human things; the second, *Ethics*, which treated of virtue and vice, and of those manners which were valuable for making men live well and happily; and the last, *Dialectics* or *Logic*, which taught the art of reasoning. Compare Cicero, *Acad. i. 5—8*, *iv. 7*, and *De Fin. i. 7*, *iii. 21*.

Obs. 2. The philosophy which existed among certain of the Oriental nations, much earlier than among the Greeks, and which was by themselves sometimes consulted and sedulously applied to their own purposes, never in ancient times was either quite of the same nature or extent, as that which flourished among the ancient Greeks, nor does it ever seem to have been polished into the form of an elegant science. Among the more noble Oriental nations, it was confined to the priests, and closely connected with religion. Both the Egyptians and Chaldeans philosophized regarding the nature and causes of things, both, however, in their own way, and in a manner adapted for the depravation of religion: and both devoted themselves principally to the contemplation of the

stars, and presumed, that, by this study and by other superstitious inventions, they were able to reveal certain secret things, and to predict future events. The political wisdom of the Egyptians was, in particular, highly celebrated. There was no little attention paid to astronomy too among the Arabians, even from the earliest times; neither were there wanting among them persons, who delighted in comprehending certain doctrines, which chiefly referred to the life and manners of men, in sententious sayings, and in showing by these, the philosophical acuteness of their genius. Short moral dictates of the same sort were in use, both among other nations, and among the Greeks themselves, in the most ancient times. The appellation of wise men, which was formerly given by the Greeks to those who shewed themselves more intelligent and perspicacious in the study of things than others, was also given by some of the Oriental nations to those who were eminent for the acuteness of a searching mind. Therefore, the Magi of both the Egyptians and Chaldeans, were called חכמים or *Wise men*, Exod. vii. 11, Dan. ii. 13. By the same or a similar title, Job and his friends addressed each other, and also designated those who among the Arabians, had uttered the most important maxims regarding human affairs. See Job viii. 8—10; xii. 2, 3, 12; xv. 2, 18, 19; xxxii. 6—8; xxxiii. 33; xxxiv. 2, 10, 34; xxxvii. 24. The political wisdom of the Egyptians seems to be denoted by the word σοφία in Acts vii. 22. Lastly, among the Arabians, حكمة , the usual word for *wisdom*, was,

even in ancient times, employed to express any superiority of genius or knowledge, and, in more recent ages, is used to denote, in an eminent manner, the science of philosophy received from the Greeks.

Obs. 3. Therefore, while we attribute some sort of philosophy to the Hebrews, we neither wish to compare them with the Greeks, celebrated for their more polished cultivation of all kinds of learning, nor with some other Oriental nations, renowned for their skill in science: still, however, we may attribute to them something worthy of the name of wisdom in the meaning, in which we have already stated that it was used by the ancient Greeks and other ancient nations, although from the condition of the nation it was of a somewhat different sort. And indeed the Hebrew word חכמה *wisdom*, which we have spoken of, Vol. i. p. 237, is particularly applied to him, who, through the aids of study, shews himself wiser than common men; in which use, too, the word בינה *understanding*, sometimes occurs. But the study of every sort of wisdom was among the Hebrews, open to every one capable of it, and not confined to the priests. It was likewise closely connected with religion, but with pure and divine religion; and consequently was not at all delighted with that astronomy which was the handmaid of superstition, and which, among almost all the other Oriental nations, was in the highest honour; but it loved to be occupied in the investigation of those things alone, from which the greatest power was derived for promoting among their countrymen the good and usefulness of public government, or the salutary love of piety and virtue,

which was eminently, both in other places and in Psalm cxi. 10, denominated wisdom ; and on this theme of moral wisdom, were most of those sententious apothegms, which were equally the delight of the Hebrews, and their relatives the Arabians, exercised.

Obs. 4. This philosophical study, embracing no wide circuit, had no place in the nomadic life of the Hebrew Patriarchs ; and though Abraham shewed noble feelings, both of religion and virtue, yet the name of a philosopher would not be suitably applied to him. It is, however, suitable to those persons who are introduced as the speakers in the book of Job, and to the author of that very ancient work ; in which, considering its age, an incomparable degree of philosophic genius is manifested. Again, if Solon, by general consent, obtained the most illustrious place among the seven wise men of Greece, because he was the celebrated lawgiver of the Athenians, the honourable title of the wisest man is certainly due to Moses, the far more ancient and excellent lawgiver of the Israelites ; which wisdom he received partly indeed from his Egyptian education, but principally from the instruction of God himself.

To Samuel is also due great commendation for similar wisdom, not only for his uncommon political prudence in which he excelled, but also because, with singular perspicacity, he distinguished himself above the vulgar, by not sticking in the outer bark of the divine Mosaic constitution, but in being able to penetrate to its inmost core. 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. And whilst the schools of the prophets, which were either

first founded by Samuel, or at least enlarged and rendered more useful by him, served for this purpose, the scholars in these may be accounted in so far, students of wisdom, although not to be at all compared with those who frequented the schools of the Greek philosophers. Undoubtedly, in these prophetic schools, Asaph, who lived in the time of David, was educated, a man particularly worthy of the name of a philosopher, to whom we owe some Psalms which we have already mentioned, Vol. ii. p. 192, among which Psalms l. and lxxiii. hold a distinguished place. But neither during the whole time whilst the former state of the Hebrews lasted, nor ever afterwards, was there any one equal for the celebrity of his wisdom to Solomon, who shewed himself altogether a philosophic king, in the government of the Israelitish empire, in the study of religion and ethics, and in the cultivation of learning: who, therefore, both by his own countrymen and by foreigners, was admired as a man of the rarest wisdom, 1 Kings v. 9—14; x. 1—8, 23, 24. After the destruction of the temple, and during the captivity, Daniel stood in particularly high estimation for political wisdom with different foreign princes. Lastly, after the restoration to their country, and before the Jews had begun to be delighted with the study of foreign wisdom, there seems not to have been wanting among them, men to whom the title of philosophers might be applied. It certainly belongs to him, to whom we owe Ecclesiastes; concerning which book, whose subject is of a moral nature, and a few other philoso-

phical books of the Hebrews yet extant, we shall treat in the following chapter.

§ 2.

The ancient philosophy of the Hebrews consisted not in abstract notions, or in abstruse contemplations, nor was it wrapt up in the veil of mysteries, but was simple, popular, and adapted to the common purposes of life ; and as long as poetry flourished, it generally delighted to commend itself to all, by arraying itself in the pleasing poetic garb.

Obs. 1. As the genius of the ancient Hebrews, which was vivid, active, light, and almost puerile, could not comprehend abstract notions, and delighted not in abstruse and long protracted meditations, in which the mind rolled back as it were, and contracted upon itself alone, internally indulges : that philosophy only pleased them which subjected things to their senses, and, in treating these, it employed no long and subtle reasonings. Therefore, Moses did not endeavour to reduce his laws into a code, carefully arranged in suitable order, so as skilfully to exhibit, from the principles of political wisdom, the reason of each, and how they were mutually connected and dependent : but enacted them as occa-

sion required, and comprehended them in separate precepts, very easy to be understood and adapted to the intellect of the people. Nor did Solomon, or those others who cultivated ethics, that most important moral part of philosophy, endeavour to enumerate particulars, to bring it back to its principles, or to frame it into the exact form of a science: but they, for the most part, comprehended whatever they thought most fitted for producing probity of manners, and the prudent conduct of life, in disjoined and short sentences, which would by their acuteness strike the mind. Nor, lastly, if any of them endeavoured to investigate more obscure subjects and their reasons, did they employ for their purpose arguments of the kind which an acute logic teaches, but those which would have the greatest power over the feelings of men.

Obs. 2. The ancient philosophy of the Hebrews had nothing in common with the mysteries of the Egyptians, and of some other ancient nations, among whom those who professed wisdom, kept their doctrines secret to themselves and their disciples, and so veiled them, as studiously to withdraw them from the sight of the vulgar. For what Moses, Deuter. xxx. 11—14, said regarding his doctrine, that it was not far from the Israelites, but near to each of them, might also be said of every part of that philosophy, anciently cultivated by the Hebrews. The manner, which their wise men constantly observed, was adapted to the use and understanding of the common people: neither were they desirous of being wise for themselves alone, but whatever knowledge they were able, by their understanding, to attain, that they were

desirous of making available for public use: and their principal object always was to recommend the salutary love of piety and virtue. In a word, their philosophy was simple and popular, such in all respects as that adopted by Socrates, the first among the Greeks who brought down philosophy from heaven, and applied it to common life, as we are informed by Cicero, *Tuscul. Quest.* v. 4. and *Academ.* i. 4.—But should at times any thing seem to be obscure in the ancient mode of philosophizing among the Hebrews, this ought not to be attributed to them, but to us alone, who have such a different manner of thinking and speaking; and who, consequently, must endeavour as much as possible, by the use of all proper means, to insinuate ourselves into their age and genius.

Obs. 3. Such being the nature of the philosophy of the Hebrews during the times referred to in the books of the Old Testament, we can easily understand, how poetry appeared to their wisest men as the means best adapted for propounding their doctrines in a manner fitted for persuading others. For poetry both recommends the sentiments themselves by its fascinations, and by its images renders those things which are remote from the senses, easier of conception, and almost subjects them to the eyes. Therefore, as long as poetry flourished, they were accustomed, for the most part, to clothe their disquisitions and precepts of wisdom in its garb: and as the prophets, with regard to their prophecies, so in like manner Asaph, Solomon, and many other Hebrews, who may be called philosophers, were accus-

tomed to adapt the most useful excogitations of their genius to the sweetness of poetry—both of them in order that they might make the greater impression on their countrymen, whose instruction was their object.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL BOOKS.

§ 1.

Among those books of the Old Testament, which we may account and call philosophical, the book of Job holds the first place, both from its antiquity and genius: The unknown author of which has given an admirable vindication of the divine government, in a sort of dramatic form, and has displayed a poetically gifted genius, that is quite admirable.

Obs. 1. The subject of the book of JOB, which has its name from its principal personage, is most important and altogether philosophical, but closely connected with religion, and has for its object to shew, that the divine government of human things ought not to be found fault with, or accused of injustice; because it equally exceeds the understanding of man, as much as the divine greatness, such as it every where appears in the frame of things, does, and because God in

all his actions is most wise. The author has not pursued this argument by the employment of subtle and abstract disquisitions, but has called it into action, and displayed it before the eyes, and splendidly adorned it with all the graces of poetry. He describes in the beginning a man of the greatest integrity, and exceedingly prosperous, who, by the permission of God himself, and without any fault of his own, becomes extremely wretched, and who, although in addition afflicted with a very dreadful disease, preserves the constancy of his mind immoveable, C. i. and ii. He then, C. iii.—xxvi., introduces him disputing in poetical language with three friends who had come to him: for which disputation, the very bitter complaints of Job himself, extorted by the long silence of his friends, and his frustrated hope of deriving some consolation from them, afforded the occasion. His friends, prepossessed with that opinion of antiquity, that all the more grievous misfortunes which befall men under the just government of God, are only punishments which they have merited, at first accuse Job covertly rather, but afterwards more openly, of being wretched through his own fault. He, on the other hand, endeavours in every way to remove from himself this accusation, and in the height of dispute sometimes inveighs too bitterly against God himself. But after having triumphantly reduced to silence his accusers, he speaks more calmly regarding the divine administration, C. xxvii.—xxxi. Then a new disputant presents himself, who, after being described briefly in historical style, brings forward, in poetical language less polished and less full of ima-

gery, his opinion regarding Job and his misfortunes, which was, indeed, milder than that of his three friends, but which does not absolve the wretched man from all blame, C. xxxii.—xxxvii. But, while he is speaking, a vehement tempest arises, which put to silence this disputant, and God appears addressing Job in a speech of the highest poetic sublimity; in which, after shewing that his mode of action is not investigable by mortals, he brings him to the most humble feelings, C. xxxviii.—xlii. 1—6. Lastly, there is subjoined a very brief historical narrative, in which is described the divine reprehension of those who had condemned Job as wicked, and the large compensation given to him for those evils which he had suffered.

Obs. 2. From the slight sketch we have given, it may easily be proved, by the nature of the book, that all its parts so cohere together, that there is no one of them that does not form part of the design of the author, and of the book itself. There have, indeed, long been persons, who have persuaded themselves that the historical beginning and end of the book were added in a later age as a supplement. And there are not even wanting men, who believe that the whole introduction of the new disputant is not the work of the author. But the historical parts are of such a nature, that without them, the work would be very maimed and imperfect; and the mixture of history and poetry is no objection, if we attend to what was said S. i. C. i. § 2, obs. 6, but, on the contrary, should be held as a mode of composition quite conformable to the manner of writing among the ancient Hebrews.

With regard to the new disputant, he is seen so fitly and prudently to prepare us for the appearance of God, that we cannot conceive that a later writer could have imagined any thing of the kind by which he insinuated himself so completely into the genius of the author. We confess, indeed, that there is a great difference in the whole poetic language of this portion of the book : but, at the same time, we observe, that the disputant is described by himself as a young man, who, although very perspicacious, was yet very little exercised in speaking : consequently, the difference observable shews an author who marked a suitable diversity of character in this person by his discourse, as he does in the discourses of the other persons, and of God himself.

Obs. 3. If inquiry be made into the historical truth of the book, we are not inclined to take upon ourselves the vindication of this, as it has no degree of probability in it, except in so far as that some true history may be supposed to be its ground-work, which the author, agreeably with his design, and in conformity with the characters of the persons whom he introduced, worked up into the form of a larger parable, as we have already said, Vol. ii. p. 61. And having assumed this, and considered its singular poetic power, which in every part strikes us with admiration, we have in the book of Job, which in its subject is both unique and most useful, a work of so great excellence, that no book of the whole Old Testament so clearly testifies what the force of human genius, when assisted by divine aid, can accomplish. Although we readily acknowledge the dramatic form of the work,

we do not, however, wish it to be denominated either an epic or tragic poem. *Compare*, Vol. ii. p. 154, near the end.

Obs. 4. We shall now make a few observations regarding the country and age of Job, and the persons who are introduced disputing with him, as far as relates to the interpretation of the book. According to the most probable opinion, the country, $\gamma\gamma\epsilon$, in which Job lived is *Ausitis*, a part of Idumea or Arabia Petraea, and his three friends are thought to have been Edomites. For the place where the whole action is laid is manifestly some district of Arabia; and the wisdom of the Edomites was highly renowned among the Hebrews. *See* Jer. xlix. 7. Obad. vers. 8, 9. Eliphaz is called a Temanite; and Theman was in Idumæa. *See the places referred to, and* Ezech. xxv. 13. Bildad is called a Shuhite, from Shuah as it seems; for he was one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah, who were sent into Arabia, Gen. xxv. 2, 6. We may also make out from Job xv. 19, that Zophar, who is called a Naamathite, was also an Arabian by nation. Lastly, Elihu, who finally presented himself, seems to us to have been an Aramæan, and not a feigned personage, (*compare* Job xxxii. 2. Genesis xxii. 20, 21; xxiv. 24), of the family of Nahor which resided in Mesopotamia, and that, induced by the love of wisdom, he was inclined to reside among the Edomites for some time; and if we assume this, we shall easily see the reason of what in his style is in some degree foreign, and less elegant. But the time in which the principal personage, and consequently his friends lived, is so mani-

festly very near to the age of the Hebrew patriarchs, that there can scarcely be a doubt on this point.

Obs. 5. It remains that we say something regarding the time of the composition of the book itself, and of its author: and the more we accurately inquire into this, the more are we persuaded that the unknown author of this book flourished not long after the time of Job, or that period which is about the middle, between the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses; that he was by nation a Hebrew, and was one of those Israelites who dwelt in Goshen, and were grievously oppressed and enslaved by the Egyptians. For almost everywhere marks of the highest antiquity are impressed on this book, and argue the author a Hebrew by nation, who had a very great knowledge both of Egypt and Arabia, and who was no stranger to those notions which were afforded to the patriarchs regarding God and the creation of man, compare Job x. 9; xxvii. 3; xxxiii. 4, 6, and Gen. ii. 7; iii. 19; and he frequently alludes to the afflicted condition of slaves, and the cruel vexations of tyrants, as in C. iii. 18; v. 15, 16; vii. 1—3; ix. 24; xii. 5, 6; xxiv. 2, &c.: xxxiv. 28—30, and likewise in xl. and xli., respecting which chapters, see Vol. i. p. 278. Therefore, Moses, as it seems to us, esteemed this book as being a work of great value, and worthy of being put into the hands of his countrymen to be preserved by them as a sacred deposit with the greatest care: neither do we wonder at those who have supposed him to be its author, but we are hindered from following their opinion, by the great difference of the style from his, although we certainly think that they

have proved that Moses made great use of it, and took many expressions from it. And although a like use of this book of Job cannot be shewn from the writers of the first times downwards, it yet can be shewn from some of the Psalms of David; and Solomon, at least in the book of Proverbs, particularly in C. viii. 22—31, with which compare Job xxviii. 25—28, has not obscurely indicated that the book of Job was known to him, and highly esteemed by him; and not to bring more instances, Jeremiah manifestly imitated Job in the place we have already quoted, Vol. ii. p. 254; consequently that manifest imitation alone of the passage in Job by Jeremiah, more than sufficiently convicts those moderns of entertaining a false opinion, who believe that the book was composed after the Babylonish captivity, to which it bears reference.

§ 2.

The title of a philosophical book is justly given to the collection of Proverbs, which is chiefly due to Solomon; which, indeed, is a work deserving the greatest recommendation for its excellence, both on account of the general utility of its principal subject, and of its style of poetry.

Obs. 1. The book of PROVERBS, which bears on its front the name of the most wise king Solomon, comprehends a great multitude of maxims which have a

reference to the wise and prosperous conduct of life. But as some of the proverbs of the other Oriental nations, and particularly of the Arabians, who are most celebrated in this way, are not of a moral nature, and, too, have often no other merit but a certain degree of point and acuteness, so likewise in this book of Solomon there are maxims occasionally more remarkable for the acuteness of genius displayed in them than for their moral utility. But by far the greater part of them are conducive to probity of conduct: and there is no collection of proverbs, which, particularly if respect be had to antiquity and usefulness, equals, much less surpasses, that of Solomon.

Obs. 2. The whole of this book is poetical, and the antithetic parallelism, of which we have spoken, Vol. ii. p. 157, is chiefly employed, from the very nature of the subject requiring brevity and great point. But when Solomon pursues through many of the sentences a continued argument, his style becomes often very splendid and sublime; as in that passage where he introduces wisdom as the eternal companion of the supreme God, and the most valuable friend of man—which passage we have, in Vol. i. p. 252, already quoted.

Obs. 3. The book of Proverbs consists of three greater divisions. The first is from chap. i.—ix. It contains a general recommendation of wisdom, or the wise direction of life, set forth almost in one unbroken flow.^a This part, which breathes admirably the polished and philosophical genius of Solomon, some

^a Uno fere tenore propositam.—*Orig.*

moderns do not believe to be his, for this reason chiefly, because it scarcely can be conceived how a king, who had an innumerable number of wives and concubines, should have exhorted others in the strongest manner to chastity and abstinence from impure pleasures. But he, who as a king thought it belonged to the splendour of his kingdom, which he much affected and pursued to the utmost of his power, that he should not be inferior in the number of his women to the other princes of the East, easily saw by his great political wisdom, that it was by no means conducive to the good of individual Israelites, and to the advantage of the whole state, that the people should attempt in any way to conform themselves to the example of their king, and therefore he was anxious, like a good father, to bestow the more pains in recommending temperance and the sanctity of the married state to his subjects. Nay, may it not even perhaps be collected by comparing Prov. iv. 3—6, with 1 Kings ii. 1—4, that the whole of this part was composed by Solomon shortly after the death of David, when he had not as yet fallen into that Oriental luxury, and whilst he had only the daughter of the king of Egypt to wife. *Compare* 1 Kings iii. 1, and xi. 1—4.—The second part of the book again, chap. x.—xxii. 16, contains various maxims, also rightly ascribed to Solomon, but arranged in no sort of order, and to these are added some appendixes, from chap. xxii. 17, to the end of chap. xxiv.—The third part consists of chap. xxv.—xxix., with a double or rather triple appendix : of which the two former, chap. xxx. and xxxi. 1—9, have peculiar

inscriptions, and the last from chap. xxxi. 10, to the end of the book, contains a separate commendation of a good wife.

Obs. 4. Though then the first two parts of the book seem to be ascribable to Solomon, this forms no reason why we should not refuse to ascribe the whole of the book, as it now stands, to this one author. And indeed, since it is manifest from chap. xxv. 1, that* in the time of king Hezekiah, and by his order, some Proverbs were collected, which had mostly been composed by Solomon himself, but partly also by some other wise men in imitation of his example; this was the reason why they were all called by the general name of Solomon's Proverbs. But, at the same time, as may with probability be conjectured, different appendixes, which formed a very fit addition to Solomon's book, seem to have been added. As, however, in the second part of the book some maxims occur twice, this seems to us to be best explained by the assumption, that the same maxims were brought out by Solomon more than once on different occasions; but that the whole of them which are contained in this part, were written out, as the king had delivered them on fit occasions, for the use of others, and after his death more were added, without any change of order, to the former part.—But, as it appears from 1 Kings, v. 12, how ready and fertile a genius Solomon possessed for devising and uttering maxims, and as it is not credible that all these were consigned to writing, it may however easily have happened, that very many of them which did not occur in the book of Solomon itself, may have been noted by the ser-

vants of the king, and the other chief men: which, therefore, as far as they could be found, Hezekiah caused to be collected, with the view that, in this most noble book, enriched even by other proofs of wisdom similar to that of Solomon, which some persons imitated, nothing might be wanting which could be justly desired.

*

§ 3.

The song of singular poetical elegance, which bears the name of Solomon, we are of opinion was composed by him, and may be honored with the title of a philosophical book, because it recommends, in the manner the best adapted to persuade, the most chaste attachment of one man joined to one woman in the bonds of marriage.

Obs. 1. We have not the least doubt that the SONG, or the SONG OF SONGS, *i. e.* the most excellent song, is rightly attributed to Solomon. For the whole hue of the book, and its exquisite poetic elegance, seems to us to point so strongly to the very splendid age of that king, and to his genius wholly disposed to florid diction, such as he has shewn in the book of Proverbs, *e. g.* in chap. vii. 10—18, that though his name were not inscribed on the commencement of the book, we should readily suspect that he was its author. As then it is said in 1 Kings v. 12, that he composed very many songs, among those, we may suppose, that a certain

collection of songs, having one common subject, and to which was prefixed a title dictated by their excellence, was supposed on account of their singular beauty to be superior. Certainly the arguments which some have brought forward to prove the age of the composition of this book, to be of later date, we do not consider to be such as to invalidate the force of the argument derived from the nature of the poetry, which not obscurely argues Solomon to be the author. The principal argument almost in opposition is drawn from the frequent use of the prefix ψ . But as this particle, although more rarely, had been already employed by the most ancient poets, Job xix. 29; Judg. v. 7, why should not Solomon have preferred it to the longer $\psi\psi$, either for other causes, or for the sake of greater brevity, and being more agreeable?

Obs. 2. Many have rightly observed that this book does not contain one undivided poem, but many short ones. It is, however, difficult to determine how they are to be divided, and where each begins and ends. But as we have already said, in the former observation, they are most closely connected in their subject. For they are manifestly employed in describing the chastest love subsisting between a certain young man and a girl betrothed to him: in which description the poet gives reins to a most luxuriant imagination. But he was both an Oriental and a king by no means averse to luxuriancy; but in this poetic luxuriancy, although it may appear to Europeans excessive and somewhat offensive, nothing is seen adapted to excite or nourish impure feelings in the mind. Nay, indeed, the author seems to have

studiously endeavoured to adorn the virtuous loves of the future spouses with all those allurements which a fervid and oriental genius could imagine, that he might more efficaciously recal the young men of his time from the enticements of impure love: which purpose, not at all opposed to the mind of Solomon, though he himself did not keep within bounds, as we have already signified in the former §, obs. 3, he has so executed, as to demonstrate that he excelled in the wisdom which is adapted for the common purposes of life. But had he, like an austere teacher, philosophised abstrusely on this subject, is it credible that he would have easily persuaded others of the truth of his doctrine? But to recommend such loves as are altogether commendable to the oriental youth desirous of delights, in such a manner as that they might feel themselves allured and drawn to these loves, through the very sense of pleasure itself; this we justly conclude to be highly worthy of an oriental philosopher of great genius.

§ 4.

The book of the Old Testament generally known by the title of Ecclesiastes, which remains for us to notice, is indeed accommodated to the philosophical genius of Solomon; but by its whole nature, and particularly by its style, argues a much later writer, who ingeniously introduces Solomon speaking.

Obs. 1. The third book of the Old Testament inscribed with the name of Solomon, is generally called ECCLESIASTES. In the Alexandrine version it is named *Εκκλησιαστικῆς*, and by this word is expressed the Hebrew קהלת : the true meaning of which word is disputed ; it seems to us, however, most probable that it designated a person, who undertook the office of collecting various observations advantageous for the conduct of life. The word קהל has the signification of *drawing together, congregating, collecting*, and the feminine termination of the noun is easily received from its being used for an office or dignity. And if we consult chap. xii. 9, 10, of this book, the author himself there seems to us to explain, in the way we have done, the title assumed, as one of a moral office.

Obs. 2. There are great disputes regarding the author of the book and his age : some accounting King Solomon himself the author, others some more recent wise man, who feigned Solomon as the speaker, regarding whose age, however, all are not of the same opinion. We are prevented from believing that this book was written by Solomon, not only by the whole nature of the book, which shews nothing of that perspicuous, elegant, pleasing manner of philosophizing, dressed out in all the beauties of poetry, which Solomon in his other compositions exhibits ; but also in particular, by the language of the book being for the most part prose, and very unlike to that of which we have an illustrious example, 1 Kings viii. 23—61, but, on the contrary, weak, poor, low, very loose and inelegant, and altogether such as no one will persuade

us, was ever employed by Solomon : and consequently the more that any one, free from prejudice, considers these things, the more certain indications will he perceive of an author who lived after the captivity. We do not however agree with those who think that certain Greek words, nay even certain modes of speaking conformed to the Greek model, are found in this book : its whole hue, however, if you except certain sentences derived from other quarters which the author has inserted, certainly not obscurely indicates that period when the Hebrew language, such as was in use among the common people, to whom the author wished altogether to conform himself as destining his work for their use, had greatly degenerated. Such being the case, we doubt not that the book was composed some time, according to our judgment, after the age of Ezra and Nehemiah, at which period there were numbers who applied themselves to writing books, *compare* chap. xii. 12, which number of books there spoken of can scarcely be reconciled to a more ancient period. But that the author lived before the time that the philosophy of the Greeks became known to the Jews, may be shewn from the fact, that not the slightest trace of it appears in the book.

Obs. 3. But when we say, that Solomon was in this book introduced as the speaker by some later writer, we do not wish to be understood as if he intended to pass off the book, as written by that king. For even in the early ages, it was customary with the Hebrew poets, for one to speak in the person of another, and to assume as it were his character, without

giving premonition of doing so, as we have seen Vol. ii. p. 172, and 249. Why then should not some wise man, removed from Solomon by an interval of many ages, assuming his character, employ a similar artifice?

This, however, it may be said, seems to have been peculiar to the poets. But in this latter age, true Hebrew poetry had expired; the author, however, occasionally attempts a kind of poetry, principally in chap. xii. 2—6, very pretty indeed, but not remarkable for its elegance and sublimity. But this artifice had in it no fraudulent intention, but was particularly commendable. And the writer himself, if we understand any thing of the matter, was desirous of distinguishing himself from him, whose person he had assumed, in the concluding clause, chap. xii. 9—14. But the wisdom of Solomon was most celebrated, and the author might hope, should he introduce him, restored as it were to life, speaking, that the consequence would be, that the celebrity and authority of so great a name, would have a much greater energy in persuading men, than if he were to speak in his own name. How greatly too, an ingenious fiction, not unworthy of a philosopher, was popular among the Jews, we think can be proved from the circumstance, that the more recent author of the book having the title *Σοφία Σολομωντος*, though very far inferior to the author of Ecclesiastes, whom he proposed to imitate, and who was captivated too with the love of a foreign philosophy, was anxious to recommend the admonitions of his own wisdom, by assuming the name of king Solomon.

Obs. 4. The subject of this philosophical book is most excellent. For its object is to shew, that most

of the pursuits in which men engage in order to pass life happily, are vain ; and, consequently, that the pursuit of piety and virtue alone, is in every respect commendable, as through it, the true happiness of mortals is attainable. That it was the object of the author to convince men of the truth of this most important doctrine, he himself clearly testifies, in the end of the book, chap. xii. 13, 14. But this indeed is easy to be gathered from the whole work. For Solomon himself, than whom there was none at any time, among the Hebrews, to whom the different pursuits of men were better known, is introduced, passing each of them in review, and pointing out their vanity, as shewn by his own proper experience. It is, however, very difficult clearly and with probability, to make every part of the book suit with the author's purpose. For indeed he at times, when he thinks a fit opportunity occurs, throws in some maxims for the prudent direction of life ; such chiefly, as ascribed seemingly to Solomon by tradition, were handed about in his time, and which not a little interrupt and oppose the connexion of the reasonings. In order to the better understanding of the whole book, it is, however, most useful to observe in general, that Solomon is brought in, holding up to view the different feelings of mind which arose on his contemplation of the pursuits of men, so as not to dissemble the doubts which he had, with regard to divine providence and a future life : which, however, afterwards a more wise consideration of the matter, quite expelled from his mind, as we have already indicated in Vol. i. p. 296, 297.

APPENDIX.

NOTE by Translator to Vol. ii. page 232.—The Translator has frequently felt surprised that Kennicott's observations on 2 Sam. chap. vii. in his *Remarks on Select Passages of the Old Testament*, page 109, have excited so little attention, considering the great importance of this chapter, if it contain, as Kennicott thinks, the promise to David that the Messiah should be his descendant. In order to call the attention of those who may read this book to the point, the Translator has taken the liberty of adding Kennicott's remarks on Nathan's prophecy, and David's thanksgiving and acknowledgments to God on the occasion, with some observations of his own on Kennicott's criticisms. Kennicott's remarks are as follows :

“ Christ being to descend from DAVID, there can be no doubt but that this promise, as made to David, was *recorded* in the *history* of David. 'Tis remarkable, that David's life is given more at large, than that of any other person in the Old Testament ; and it cannot be supposed that the historian omitted to record *that promise*, which was more honourable to David than any other circumstance. The *record* of this promise, if written at all, must have been written in this chapter ; in the message *from God by Nathan to David*, which is here inserted. Here (I am fully persuaded) the promise was, and still is, recorded : and the chief reason why our divines have so frequently missed it, or been so much perplexed about it, is owing to our very improper translation of the 10th and 14th verses.

“ This wrong translation, in a part of Scripture so very interesting, has been artfully laid hold of, and expatiated upon,

splendidly, by the Deistical Author of *the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*; who pretends to demonstrate, that the promise of a Messiah could not be here recorded. His reasons (hitherto I believe unanswered) are three—first: because, in ver. 10, the prophet speaks of *the future* prosperity of the Jews, as to be afterwards *fixed*, and *no more afflicted*; which circumstances are totally repugnant to the fate of the Jews, as connected with the birth and death of Christ—secondly: because the Son, here promised, was (ver. 13,) to *build an house*; which house, it is pretended, must mean *the temple of Solomon*; and of course *Solomon* must be the Son here promised—and, thirdly: because verse 14 supposes, that this Son *might commit iniquity*; which could not be supposed of *the Messiah*. The first of these objections is founded on our wrong translation of verse 10; where the words should be expressed as relating to the time *past* or *present*. For the prophet is there declaring what great things GOD *had already done* for David and his people—that he *had* raised David from the sheep-fold to the throne—and that he *had* planted the Israelites in a place of safety; at rest from all those enemies who had so often before afflicted them. That the verbs ושמתי and ונטעתי may be rendered in the time *past* or *present*, is allowed by our own translators; who here (ver. 11,) render והניחתי and have caused thee to rest, and also render והגיר and telleth: which construction, made necessary here by the context, might be confirmed by other proofs almost innumerable. The translation therefore should run thus: *I took thee from the sheep-cote—and have made thee a great name—and I HAVE APPOINTED a place for my people Israel; and HAVE PLANTED them, that they dwell in a place of their own, and move no more. Neither DO the children of wickedness afflict them any more; as before time, and as since the time that I commanded judges to be over Israel: and I HAVE CAUSED thee to rest from all thine enemies.*

“ Objection the second is founded on a mistake in the sense. David, indeed, had proposed to build an house to GOD; which GOD did not admit. Yet, approving the piety of David’s in-

tention, GOD was pleased to reward it by promising—that HE *would make an house for DAVID*; which house, to be thus erected by GOD, was certainly not material, or made of stones; but a *spiritual house, or family*, to be raised up for the honour of GOD and the salvation of mankind. And this house, which GOD would make, was to be built by *David's SEED*; and this seed was to be raised up AFTER *David slept with his fathers*: which words clearly exclude *Solomon*, who was set up, and placed upon the throne, BEFORE *David was dead*. This building, promised by GOD, was to be erected by one of David's descendants, who was also to be *an everlasting king*: and, indeed, the *house*, and the *kingdom*, were both of them to be *established for ever*. Now that this *house*, or spiritual building, was to be set up, together with a *kingdom*, by the Messiah, is clear from *Zachariah*; who very emphatically says (vi. 12, 13,) *Behold the man, whose name is the branch—HE SHALL BUILD THE TEMPLE of the Lord. Even HE SHALL BUILD THE TEMPLE of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his THRONE, &c.* Observe also the language of the *New Testament*. In 1 Corinth. iii. 9—17; St. Paul says, *Ye are God's BUILDING—Know ye not, that YE are the temple of God?—the temple of God is holy, which temple YE are.* And the author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, seems to have his eye upon this very promise in *Samuel*, concerning a son to David, and of the *house* which he should build; when he says (iii. 6.) CHRIST, AS A SON, OVER HIS OWN HOUSE; WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE.

“As to the third and greatest difficulty; *that* also may be removed by a more just translation of verse 14: for the Hebrew words do not properly signify what they are now made to speak. 'Tis certain, that the principal word בִּהְעוֹתוֹ is not the active infinitive of *Kal*, which would be בִּיעוֹתוֹ but הֵעוֹת from עוה is in *Niphal*, as הִגְלוֹת from גלה. 'Tis also certain that a verb, which in the active voice signifies to *commit iniquity*, may in the passive signify to *suffer for iniquity*: and hence it is that nouns from such verbs sometimes signify *iniquity*, sometimes *punishment*. See Lowth's *Isaiah*, page 187;

with many other authorities, which shall be produced hereafter. The way being thus made clear, we are now prepared for abolishing our translation—*if he commit iniquity*; and also for adopting the true one—*even in his suffering for iniquity*. The Messiah, who is thus the person possibly here spoken of, will be made still more manifest from the whole verse thus translated. *I will be his father, and he shall be my son: EVEN IN HIS SUFFERING FOR INIQUITY, I shall chasten him with the rod of men, (with the rod due to men) and with the stripes (due to) the children of ADAM.* And this construction is well supported by *Isaiah liii. 4 and 5—he hath carried OUR SORROWS (i. e. the sorrows due to us, and which we must otherwise have suffered)—he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.* See note page 479, in Hallet. on Heb. xi. 26. Thus their GOD declares himself the father of the Son here meant;^a and promises that even amidst the *sufferings* of this son, (as they would be for the sins of others, not for his own) his mercy should still attend him: nor should his favour be ever removed from *this king*, as it had been from *Saul*. And thus (as it follows) *thine house (O David) and thy kingdom shall (in Messiah) be established for ever before ME, (before GOD): thy throne shall be established for ever.* Thus the angel, delivering his message to the virgin-mother (Luke i. 32, 33) speaks as if he was quoting from this very prophecy—*The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father DAVID; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob FOR EVER; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.* In verse 16 לַפְּנֵי is here rendered as לִפְנֵי; on the authority of one Hebrew MS., with the Greek and Syriac versions; and, indeed, nothing could be established *for ever*, in the presence of *David*, but in the presence of *GOD* only. So Dr. S. Clarke.

“Having thus shewn that the words fairly admit here the promise made to *David*, that *from his seed* should arise *Messiah, the everlasting King*; it may be necessary to add—that, if the

^a See also Heb. i. 5.

Messiah be the person here meant, as suffering innocently for the sins of others, *Solomon* cannot be; nor can this be a prophecy admitting such double sense, or be applied properly to two such opposite characters. *Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of HIMSELF or of SOME OTHER man?*—This was a question properly put by the Ethiopian treasurer, (Acts viii. 34.) who never dreamt, that such a description as he was reading, could relate to different persons, and Philip shews him, that the person was *Jesus* only. So here, it may be asked—*Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of Solomon, or of Christ?* It must be answered—of *Christ*: one reason is, because the description does *not agree* to *Solomon*, and therefore, *Solomon*, being necessarily excluded in a single sense, must also be excluded in a double. Lastly: if it would be universally held absurd, to consider the promise of *Messiah* made to *ABRAHAM*, as relating to *any other* person *besides* *Messiah*: why is there not an equal absurdity in giving a *double* sense to the promise of *Messiah* thus made to *DAVID*?

“ Next to our present very improper translation, the cause of the common confusion here has been—not distinguishing the promise here made, as to *Messiah* alone, from another made as to *Solomon* alone: the first brought by *Nathan*, the second by *Gad*; the first near the *beginning* of *David*’s reign, the second near the *end* of it; the first relating to *Messiah*’s *Spiritual* kingdom, *everlasting without conditions*; the second relating to the *fate* of the *Temporal* kingdom of *Solomon*, and his heirs, depending entirely on their *obedience* or *rebellion*, 1 Chron. xxii. 8—13, and xxviii. 7. Let the first message be compared with this second, in 1 Chron. xxii. 8—13: which the Syriac version, (at ver. 8) tells us, was delivered by *a prophet*, and the Arabic says—by *the prophet GAD*. This second message was after *David*’s *many wars*, when *he had shed much blood*; and it was this second message, that, out of all *David*’s sons, appointed *Solomon* to be his successor. At the time of the first message, *Solomon* was *not born*; it being delivered soon after *David* became king at *Jerusalem*: but *Solomon* was *born*, at the time of this second message. For though our translation very wrongly says (1 Chron. xxii. 9.)—*a Son SHALL BE born to thee—and*

his name shall be Solomon; yet the Hebrew text expressly speaks of him as *then born*. Behold, a son, (נולד, *natus est*), IS BORN to thee: and, therefore, the words following must be rendered—*Solomon is his name, and I will give peace in his days: he shall build an house for my name, &c.*

2 SAM. vii. 19.

“From David’s address to GOD, after receiving the message by Nathan, ’tis plain that David understood *the Son* promised to be THE MESSIAH; in whom *his house* was to be *established for ever*. But the words, which seem most expressive of this, are in this verse now rendered very unintelligibly—and *is this the manner of man?* Whereas the words וזאת תורת
 האדם literally signify—and *this is (or must be) the law of the man, or of the Adam, i. e. this promise must relate to the law, or ordinance, made by GOD to Adam; concerning the Seed of the Woman; the Man, or the second ADAM; as the Messiah is expressly called by St. Paul: 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. This meaning will be yet more evident, from the parallel place, 1 Chron. xvii. 17; where the words of David are now miserably rendered thus—and thou hast regarded me, according to the estate of a man of high degree. Whereas the words, וראיתני כתור
 המעלה האדם literally signify—and thou hast regarded me, according to the order of the ADAM THAT IS FUTURE, or THE MAN THAT IS FROM ABOVE (for the word המעלה very remarkably signifies hereafter as to time, and from above as to place); and thus St. Paul, including both senses—THE SECOND MAN IS THE LORD FROM HEAVEN,—and, Adam is the figure of him that was to come, or the future: Rom. v. 14. See the Preface of the late learned Mr. Peters, on Job; referred to, and confirmed as to this interesting point, in a Note subjoined to my Sermon, on A VIRGIN shall conceive, &c. page 49—52; 8vo. 1765: a part of that Note here follows—‘The speech of David (2 Sam. vii. 18—29.) is such, as one might naturally expect from a person overwhelmed with the greatness of the promised blessing: for it is abrupt, full of wonder, and fraught with repetitions. And now, what can David say unto thee? What,*

indeed! For thou LORD GOD, knowest thy servant: thou knowest the hearts of all men, and seest how full my own heart is. For thy word's sake, for the sake of former prophecies; and according to thine own heart, from the mere motive of thy wisdom and goodness; hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. I now perceive the reason of those miraculous providences which have attended me from my youth up; taken from following the sheep, and conducted through all difficulties to be ruler of thy people: and shall I distrust the promise now made me? Thy words be true. If the preceding remarks on this whole passage are just, and well grounded; then may we see clearly the chief foundation of what St. Peter tells us (Acts ii. 30,) concerning DAVID: that, being a prophet, and knowing that GOD had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up CHRIST to sit on his throne? ”

The first thing which occurs in Dr. Kennicott's remarks just quoted, deserving of attention, is that the two verbs ושמתי and ונטעתי in the perfect of *Kal* as it is named by the Hebrew Grammarians, may be rendered in the time *past* or *present*: and he refers for proof to the practice of our translators, and to innumerable instances besides, which he could produce as rendering this enallage of tenses necessary in translating from the Hebrew. This is perfectly just, but he has not extended the observation sufficiently. The truth is, that there is no such thing in the Hebrew verb as what we call tenses. The grammarians, indeed, say that there are two, the perfect and the future. But if we attend to the use of these verbal forms, we shall find that the perfect has all the significations of the Indicative mood,^a with the exception *perhaps* of the future, and our translators, and, indeed, all the other translators into the European languages have given to it, and been obliged to give to it, in innumerable instances, the significations of the present, imperfect, perfect, and pluperfect of the Indicative. I have said that what is called the perfect of the Hebrew verb *perhaps* has not a future signification. But, without entering into the *quæstio vexata* of the Vau conversive, there are not a few instances in which it seems

^a Vid. Schroeder's Grammar, Syntax. Verb. Reg. 46. a.

necessary that it should have even a future signification given to it in translation. I shall only adduce one, out of many which might be given, from Gen. xxiii. 13., where Abraham says to Ephron the Hittite, according to our translation, "I will give, נתתי, thee money for the field." Here there is no *Vau* conversive, and yet our translators, the Vulgate, Castalio, &c. translate this perfect as it is called which in the 11th verse they had translated as a present, "I give," by the future "I will give." The Alexandrine translators omit it in the 13th verse altogether, but in the 11th verse, where this word is twice repeated, they render it first by *δίδωμι*, and next by *δεδωκα*. If then the perfect has in Hebrew the whole significations of the indicative mood, it seems altogether improper to consider it simply as a tense, when it contains in itself all the tenses. For although the principles of grammar, being founded on the constitution of the human mind, as undoubtedly they are, must be considered as fixed, yet the variations in simplicity, complexity, contrivance, and many other circumstances in different languages, arising from the state of rudeness, cultivation, and peculiar circumstances of the people, by which they are spoken, are exceedingly great. It is consequently a great mistake to assume the grammar of one or two languages as a kind of model, to which the grammar of all other languages, however different in their nature and genius, must be forced to conform. This, however, is an error into which learned men have very frequently fallen in their disquisitions on this subject. The perfect of the Hebrew language ought then to be called the indicative mood, as it is the means by which the whole of the tenses of that mood, as they exist in many other languages, can in Hebrew be expressed. In fact, the only other verbal form in that language belonging to this mood, is made up of the verb *היה* or *היהוה* with the participle of another verb. Vid. Schroeder's Gram. Syntax Verb. Reg. 55. b. One at first sight would be apt to imagine, that a language thus deficient in tenses as they are called, by which contrivance other languages express the action of the verb definitely, must be very imperfect and vague. But although it certainly in some cases wants that precision, which

in languages having a variety of tenses is derived from this circumstance, yet by its peculiar structure, the want of tenses is not much felt by one who is moderately skilled in it. The difficulties, in fact, arise principally, if not wholly, from the absurdity of grammarians having denominated those verbal forms tenses, which are in reality moods; and, in consequence, having endeavoured to restrict their significations in a degree, to which every translator into languages which have tenses, has found it impracticable to confine himself.

In the quotation from Schroeder's excellent grammar, it will be observed that while he allows to the perfect the significations also of the imperfect and pluperfect, he says nothing of its having that of the present, and occasionally that of the future, which we have assigned to it, but in notes b, c, d, to rule 46, in Syntax, he allows that in certain cases the perfect has the present and future significations. Of these significations many more examples than those we have already adduced might easily be given. It is not, however, peculiar to the Hebrew language, that there should be in it a verbal form, having all the significations of the indicative mood, for the Greek Aorist of the indicative is just such a form; and we are persuaded that this form in the Greek language is of Oriental or Phœnician origin. In the Latin too we have a trace of it remaining in the preteritive verbs *odi*, *cœpi*, *memini*, *novi*, whose perfects have both the present and perfect significations, while their pluperfects have also the signification of the imperfect, and their perfect futures that of the simple future. Nay, Dr. Bentley goes farther in his Notes to Horace, Od. iii. 23, 19, where he says "Ubi præteritum ponitur in significatione præsentis, vel potius *perpetui* temporis: qualia passim occurrunt apud Græcos Latinosque. Noster, Od. iii. 29.

Plerumque gratæ divitibus vices,
Mundæque parvo sub lare pauperum
Cenæ sine aulæis et ostro
Sollicitam *explicuere* frontem.

Perpetui, inquam, hoc temporis est, perinde ac si dixisset, *explicant*, *explicuerunt*, *explicabunt*. Sic Epist. i. 2. 48." In this observation of Dr. B. regarding the perfect in the Greek

and Latin languages we coincide, provided it be limited to one peculiar use of this tense in these languages, which seems to have escaped the notice of Grammarians. This use is the employment of this tense by the Greeks and Latins in expressing general truths, which in one of its significations it is well fitted for doing. For it has not been sufficiently attended to, that these languages have only one tense for expressing two states of action, which are in themselves different, and which we have two distinct verbal forms in our language to express. Thus in the example above produced by Dr. B. *explicuere* in Latin stands for both the English verbal forms *they have smoothed*, and *they smoothed*: the first expressing completed action, which, however, is not necessarily ended, while the second expresses completed action, which is, also *at an end*, or finished. For there are innumerable actions which are completed each moment, while they are going on, and not yet ended, *e. g.* writing, reading, speaking, walking, praising, &c. Thus a person may with propriety say while still walking, *I have walked* a small part of my journey, or, while still writing, *I have written* but half of my task, where it is evident that in English we could not substitute *walked* for *have walked*, nor *wrote* for *have written*, without altogether changing the meaning. But in Greek and Latin there is only one verbal form for expressing both *I walked* and *I have walked*, *I wrote* and *I have written*. Inattention to this imperfection, for so it must be reckoned, in the Greek and Latin languages, has been the cause of much confusion and many mistakes. It is then in the first of these significations that *explicuere* is capable of being used so as to embrace the meanings of *explicant*, *explicuerunt*, *explicabunt*: in other words, so as to express a general truth, or what *is*, *has been*, and *will be* true. For if we say that “entertainments *have smoothed* the anxious brow,” it is implied that *heretofore, up to this time*, these entertainments have done so, and the mind naturally extends by analogy the fact to all future time, and consequently views it as a fact that always has been, and always will be true. Had, however, the second signification of *explicuere* been substituted, and should we translate the passage, “entertainments *smooth-*

ed the anxious brow," no such general truth would have been expressed, but only a particular fact which took place at a former time. The second example referred to by Bentley will place this in a very clear light, Horat. Ep. i. 2. 48.

Non domus et fundus, non æris acervus et auri
 Ægroto domini *deduxit* corpore febres
 Non animo curas.

The meaning here, evidently is, that neither houses nor lands, nor heaps of gold and silver, *have removed* fevers from the sick possessors, nor anxious cares from their minds—have not done so heretofore, and consequently (by analogy it is concluded) will not do so in time to come. Such general truths, every one knows, are usually expressed in our language by what is improperly termed, in this instance at least, the present tense and the passage would be translated into English, "neither houses, nor lands, nor heaps of gold and silver *remove*," &c. Which of the two modes of expressing a general truth is the best and most accurate requires not to be considered here: for our object in this discussion is to shew that even the most perfect languages are liable to the same objection, in particular cases at least, which might seem at first sight very formidable to the doctrine, that the Hebrew has only one verbal form to express the whole indicative mood.

We here add, that what is called by Hebrew Grammarians the future tense, is not merely a tense expressing futurity, but really serves the purpose of the whole subjunctive mood, and is of necessity so rendered by translators of the Scriptures into the European languages. It is not here meant to be asserted, that the Hebrews have no other means of expressing conditional or subjunctive significations, for they have many conjunctions joined both to the perfect and the future by which they accomplish this object, as happens in other languages. The conjunction used most frequently for this purpose is ׀, the effect and significations of which have been too little attended to by interpreters and translators. Vid. Schroeder's Gram. Syntax. Rule 109. Ewald's Heb. Gram. § 603—621. Lond. 1836. We, indeed,

feel convinced, that were the various significations, and greatly varied use of this conjunction, which is not a copulative only, but also an adversative and illative conjunction, often too serving the purpose of the relative, (Vid. Gesen. Lex. Man.), and above all, of the relative conjunctions *ut* and *quod*, carefully studied, the mystery of the Vau conversive might be solved. However this may be, the translations of the Hebrew Scriptures into modern languages might undoubtedly be very greatly improved by the proper rendering of this particle in a great variety of instances, instead of confining it to the copulative signification, which is too generally the case.

We have long been convinced of the truth of the above doctrine, that the Hebrew perfect is not a tense, but represents the whole of the tenses of the indicative mood in other languages, as the aorist of the indicative does in the Greek; and in like manner that the future represents not only the future, but also the whole tenses of the subjunctive mood as they are found in languages that are more cultivated. We were, therefore, much gratified to find this opinion adopted by Ewald in his Hebrew Grammar, (German Edit.), as appears from the following extract. "It is a remarkable characteristic of the Hebrew verb, that it wants the numerous and distinctive forms for making the tenses to which we are accustomed in our modern languages. Besides the participle and the infinitive it possesses only two forms, which originally, like the participle, were without any distinction of time, and differed from each other rather as moods, so that the first mood answered in general to our indicative, and the second to our subjunctive. In the original form of the verb there was no distinction whatever of tense: the *sense and connection* alone determined whether the subject of discourse related to the present, to the past, or to the future—a want of precision, which is not surprising in the oldest and most simple languages." The doctrine so clearly laid down in this quotation, and well illustrated in what follows, is expressed in much more vague and ambiguous terms in the English translation of this Grammar printed at Leipsic, and published by Whittaker, London: a book, indeed, far too transcendental in its views and style for us to pretend to understand. This

doctrine is, however, of such primary importance to the understanding and interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures, that we felt anxious to bring it before the mind of the students of this language, in the brief remarks to which we must confine ourselves at present, although quite aware that it requires much more discussion and elucidation. But we are firmly persuaded that it requires only candid and careful observation on the part of the reader of the Hebrew scriptures to bring him to a full conviction of its truth.

With Dr. Kennicott's remark, that "it is certain that a verb which in the active voice signifies *to commit iniquity* may in the passive voice signify *to suffer for iniquity*," we are not prepared to agree. As he has not produced his authorities, and only referred to Lowth's Isaiah in the absurd way, too common with writers, of quoting a page without mentioning the edition, we are not able to examine what weight is due to them. And so far is it from being clear or self-evident that the active "*commit iniquity*," should be in the passive *suffer for iniquity*, that it rather seems to be contrary to every analogy of language. We, indeed, suspect, that it has been this forced signification attempted to be imposed on the Niphal of the verb עוֹרָה by Kennicott, which has caused his criticism on this important passage of scripture to be neglected; for every one must feel that its whole force depends on the meaning of the word בָּהֶעוֹתוֹ. The verb עוֹרָה from which this infinitive comes, has for its primary signification, *flectere, to bend*, (Vid. Gesen. Lex. Man.), hence by an easy metonymy familiar to the Hebrews, it signifies *to act wickedly*, i. e. *to bend from the straight line or path*. It retains, however, according to all Lexicographers, its primary signification in Niphal, of *being bent down*; and is translated by them *incurvari, deprimi calamitatibus*, as in Psalm xxxviii. 7,—*distorqueri doloribus et spasmis*, as in Isaiah xxi. 3. This universally allowed sense of the passive voice of this verb suits so completely with the view which Kennicott intended to give of this prophecy, that it seems quite unaccountable how he overlooked what he would have found in every Lexicon, and resorted to the forced and unnatural

signification, which he has endeavoured to give to it.—Kennicott says that **העוֹת** can only be the infinitive of Niphal, forgetting that it may be that of Hiphil and Hophal also—and the Masorites have pointed it as the infinitive of Hiphil. This, however, will deserve no regard from a Christian, who remembers that in no case are the Masorites less to be followed than in their interpretations of the prophecies respecting the Messiah, and in particular, that the meaning of every prophecy is only fully brought forth when carefully compared with the event. For over almost all the prophecies a veil is in some degree necessarily thrown, which can only be altogether removed by the fulfilment. We are, therefore, fully entitled to consider **העוֹת** as the infinitive of Niphal, and not of Hiphil or Hophal, when it can be shewn that a better sense is thus brought out, and one more consistent with the context and with the facts. This we shall now endeavour briefly to prove.

This prophecy, all must allow, applies to the seed of David. The question is, what Seed? Some have applied this particular portion of it wholly to Solomon, naturally led to this interpretation, by his being the person who did build a house for the name of God, and also by its being said, that God would be to him for a Father, and he to God for a Son: an expression directly applied to Solomon, 1 Chron. xxii. 10, and xxviii. 6. These two passages are, we think, rightly explained by Kennicott, as having reference to a posterior prophecy given to David regarding Solomon; and he has well shewn, that the building an house to the name of God, is attributable to the Messiah, in a higher and more perfect sense, than to Solomon. If this last opinion be allowed to be correct, as no Christian at least will deny, then it seems to follow, that the high and perfect sense of God, being to him a Father, and he being to him a Son, belongs properly also to the Messiah, as is asserted in Heb. i. 5. Is there, on the other hand, any thing in the prophecy, as it stands in our translation, quite inapplicable to Solomon? Most undoubtedly there are two particulars which are in this predicament. The first is, that Solomon did *commit iniquity, and was not chastened with the rod of men, nor with the stripes of*

the children of men. The second is, that his kingdom was not *established for ever*, but in fact a great part of it was, immediately after his death, rent out of the hands of his son ; and was utterly put an end to at the time of the Babylonish captivity. It is then altogether absurd to apply a prophecy to a person, to whom only the one half can in any way belong, while the other half is quite inapplicable. What seems to have prevented interpreters from feeling the full force of this objection is, that in the narration of the prophecy relating to Solomon, by his father David, 1 Chron. xxii. 7—19, and repeated in chap. xxviii. 1—11, a promise is recorded of establishing the kingdom of Solomon for ever. But it deserves our particular attention, that this promise to Solomon, is always mentioned with limitation, as in 1 Chron. xxviii. 7, “ Moreover, I will establish his kingdom for ever, *if he be constant to do my commandments, and judgments.*”—v. 9. “ And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father—*if thou seek him*, he will be found of thee : but *if thou forsake him*, he will cast thee off for ever.” Compare chap. xxii. 13. In the prophecy under consideration, there is no such limitation to be found, even in the translation as it now stands, much less if the proper translation of *בדעוֹתוֹ* be adopted. The absolute nature of the promise to *one* son of David is more remarkable in the words of Nathan, as given in 1 Chron. xvii. 14, “ But I will settle *him* in *mine* house and in *my* kingdom for ever ; and his throne shall be established for evermore.” No one can, by any fair mode of interpretation, apply these words to Solomon, or, indeed, to any of the seed of David, except to the Messiah : and the confounding of this first prophecy, given by the ministration of Nathan to David, applicable in all its circumstances, when rightly translated, to the Messiah, with the prophecy given to *David himself*, (as his words, “ But the word of the Lord came unto me saying,” 1 Chron. xxii. 8, and “ But God said unto me,” chap. xxviii. 3, clearly indicate, which prophecy refers only to Solomon,) seems to have arisen from the two circumstances, of Solomon’s building an house for the name of God, and of his having the promise given to him, that God would be to him a Father, and he

should be to him a Son, if he would continue obedient to his commandments, having in the first prophecy been predicated of the Messiah, in their higher and truer sense. But, undoubtedly, it does not follow, that because Solomon, in a faint degree, resembles the Messiah in two circumstances, therefore a prophecy containing these two circumstances, predicated of a certain person, must be explained as pertaining to Solomon, although, in other respects, it is quite inapplicable. Farther, it seems to have been little attended to, that *the establishment of the kingdom and throne for ever*, admits of no possible explanation, even in the prophecy regarding Solomon, if restricted to that monarch : and if we extend the meaning of this part of the prophecy, now under consideration, to the line of the succession of his posterity, as kings of Judah, as interpreters generally explain it, and as some think is done by Ethan in the lxxxixth Psalm, composed near the time of the Babylonish captivity, we shall not extricate ourselves from the difficulty ; for the *absolute and unlimited promise*, contained in this prophecy, unlike, as we have already seen, to the promise given to Solomon, only received, and indeed only could receive, its accomplishment, in that great Son of David according to the flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ, that king who shall reign for ever and ever. But it is quite evident that Ethan, in the Psalm just quoted, where he narrates and enlarges on this prophecy, understood this to be the case : for while, in the distressful circumstances in which the kingdom of Judah then was, and when, as he complains, “ God had made void the covenant of David, profaning his crown by casting it to the ground,” he earnestly beseeches God not to be wroth for ever ; yet in his recapitulation of the prophecy given to David, on which he grounds his expostulation and prayer, he manifestly points to a greater seed of David than had yet appeared, in the expressions, “ I have laid help on one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I will make him my first born, higher (*supremus, summus, Vid. Gesen. Lex. M.*) than the kings of the earth. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall

endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." With regard to the first of these expressions, "I have laid help on one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant: with my holy oil have I anointed him;" it seems evident, that it cannot be applied to David personally, although the words seem to lead us to do so; for, on the contrary, in the prophecy under consideration, David's humble circumstances and weakness, before his exaltation to the throne, is particularly brought into view by God, and on all occasions David himself eagerly confesses, that he was not mighty, but weak, and wholly dependant on God, a truth which he had been fully taught while under the persecutions of Saul. The David here spoken of is manifestly the Messiah, as will be evident to any one who will consider with care the whole passage, and weigh the force of the expressions we have quoted. That David was the typical name of the Messiah in use about the time of Ethan, appears from Hosea, who lived probably a little before him, chap. iii. 4, 5, "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and DAVID THEIR KING; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness, in the *latter days*." Here it is evident that it was not the literal David, who had been long dead, that was to be sought by the Israelites in the latter days, *i. e.* long after the prophet's time, but a person who had the metaphorical, or typical name of David, in prophetic language. Attention to this fact must satisfy every candid person, that the David spoken of by Ethan, was not the literal, but the metaphorical David, to whom alone the expressions employed in this Psalm regarding both his character, and the duration of his kingdom, can in any tolerable way be applied. Neither is it any objection to this manner of interpreting the prophecy to David as detailed in the Psalm, that Ethan grounds his expostulation on the promise given to that monarch, of his throne and kingdom being established for ever in his seed: because the

divulsion of so considerable a part, as the kingdom of Israel from his grandson Rehoboam, must have taught the Jews to understand the limitation of that promise, so clearly expressed by David himself to Solomon, 1 Chron. xxviii. 7, and likewise must have convinced them, by the impending ruin hanging over the kingdom of Judah, denounced by the prophets, and so strongly alluded to in this Psalm, that the seed of David, whose kingdom and throne were to be established for ever, had not yet appeared in the world, at the time when this Psalm, according to the most probable opinion, was written. *Vid. Venema and Rosenmuller.* Isaiah and the other prophets had openly announced a person to arise from the seed of David, in whom the prophecy would be literally fulfilled, while they also clearly foretold the ruin of the kingdom of Judah in being at that time, and directed the whole hopes of the Jews to this future and more glorious king, who was to establish a kingdom which should never have an end. If then, these circumstances, in which Ethan, as well as the other Jews, were at the time of writing this Psalm, be taken into account, we can have no doubt, that the prophecy rehearsed in this Psalm, was the one relating to the great promise to David, that the Messiah should be his descendant, and not the posterior one, relating to Solomon.

Nothing, indeed, appears to us more unaccountable than that Christian interpreters seem not to have felt that David himself in the iid, cxth. and not a few other Psalms, giving so clear views of the Messiah as the seed who was to establish his throne and kingdom for ever, intended to draw a strong line of distinction between this descendant and Solomon, and to direct the attention of his countrymen to him, as the person they were to look to, in whom the promise of Abraham was to be fulfilled—that they and all the nations of the earth were to be blessed; and by whom an everlasting kingdom was to be set up over men. The promises to Solomon were quite of a secondary nature in his eyes; and there can be no doubt, from the facts we have just mentioned, that he understood that God took occasion, from his proposing to build a house for his name, to lay open to him his gracious intention of rewarding his

piety in this instance, by making him the progenitor of that seed of the woman, who was to bruise the head of the serpent, *i. e.* put an end to all the evil introduced by the disobedience of our first parents, and of that seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. And though he no doubt, also conjectured, that his immediate descendant was, by the prophecy of Nathan, appointed to be the builder of the house which he had proposed to build, and which he would naturally view as an earnest of the fulfilment of the whole promises given in the prophecy; yet it is inconceivable that he could have considered this son, as the great subject of the magnificent things declared in it regarding the son there spoken of, in whom his kingdom was to be established for ever. That he did not make this mistake is quite evident from the solemn acknowledgments he makes to God for the greatness of the distinction conferred upon him and his family, and by the expression of astonishment which he utters at the nature of the revelation made to him, regarding the circumstances of this seed of the woman, and of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. The whole of the misconception of interpreters concerning this prophecy of Nathan has arisen from misunderstanding the word *בְּהֵיוֹתוֹ*, and applying to it its metaphorical, instead of its literal signification, in which it is quite inapplicable to the Messiah; and from confounding this first great promise to David and his seed, with the particular limited promise regarding Solomon and the kings of Judah who were to succeed him, until the coming of the great seed and king. The last promise was rendered *void*, as Ethan expresses it, in Ps. lxxxix. 39, by the kings of Judah transgressing the conditions under which it was given: but the first unlimited promise has stood sure and been fulfilled.

It may, however, be objected, that the sense affixed by the Masorites to this word is that given by all the versions. This, however, is not a formidable objection, when we recollect that all the translators from the commencement of the Christian era, acquired their knowledge of the Hebrew language from Jewish instructors, and consequently naturally adopted the meanings they

put on words and passages. But it is not surprising that the Jewish Rabbis should repudiate a signification of this word; in this early prophecy, which gave such strength to the Christian cause, by so distinctly predicting the humiliation and sufferings of the Messiah. It is worthy of notice, however, that the Alexandrine version, as we now have it, translates this word by the ambiguous expression, εαν ελθῃ ἡ ἀδικία αὐτοῦ, i. e. *should his injustice come*, which, from the double meaning of which the genitive αὐτοῦ is susceptible, may signify, either actively, the injustice he does, or passively, the injustice done to him. From this, therefore, it appears, that in the time that version was made, the definite meaning afterwards attached by the Masorites was not then given to this word, otherwise the translators would not have left it ambiguous as we now find it. But even had they given the same translation as the Masorites, this would not have deserved much weight. For we must not forget, when consulting this version, that regarding prophecies not yet accomplished, its authors were, from the veil thrown over prophecy before its accomplishment, very liable to mistake; neither should we depend too much on their skill in the Hebrew, which had been in the state of a dead language for more than two hundred years at the least. In the case before us too, where the word in the then undeniably unpointed language, might not only be in the Niphil, Hiphil, or Hophal, infinitive of the verb פָּרַע; but in the infinitive of the cognate verb פָּרַע whose usual signification is to *bend*, to *bend down*, (a fact well deserving of our attention in this instance,) they might naturally be in doubt which of these significations of the word they should adopt. We can, however, easily understand how they might have been led to adopt the erroneous signification long afterwards assigned by the Masorites, from the unwillingness which the Jews in all ages have shewn, notwithstanding the very clear prophecies of Isaiah, and even of David himself, to believe in the *bending down under afflictions*, or the humiliation and sufferings, of the Messiah: and their not doing so, but leaving the clause ambiguous, is a strong confirmation of the meaning which Kennicott has given to it.

But by far the most powerful confirmation of this interpretation is derived from the words of David in reply to the gracious goodness of God in the revelation he had granted to him regarding the Messiah, and the magnificent promises he had given to him regarding his family and kingdom, as recorded in 2 Sam. vii. 19, and 1 Chron. xvii. 17. The first of these passages, Dr Kennicott has rendered directly, and not interrogatively as in the English translation, agreeing in this with the Septuagint οὗτος δὲ ὁ νόμος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, and with the Vulgate. But we think that it should be in the interrogative form, “Is this the law (or manner) of the man?” and be understood as expressing the astonishment of David, that the man, by whom the power of the serpent, the great enemy of mankind, was to be crushed, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, and who had just been promised to be his descendant and to establish his throne for ever, should also be bent down under calamities, and treated unjustly and cruelly, being chastened by the rod of men, and by the stripes of the children of men: (with which declaration compare Heb. ii. 10, “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings,” which we consider to be a commentary on these words of the prophecy, and an explicit reference to it.) The translation in our English Bible is quite inadmissible, from its omission of the *article* before *man* האדם, which ties down the expression in the clause to a particular man: while that of the Septuagint is quite correct, were it, as it ought to be, pointed interrogatively. If then this translation be adopted, it must be evident how strongly corroborative it is of the correctness of the translation we have given of the word בְּהֵעוֹתוֹ, and how consistent the whole passage, both the prophecy and David’s reply, is rendered.

We in some respect differ from Dr. Kennicott in his translation of the parallel passage from 1 Chron. xvii. 17, which we think ought to be translated, “and thou hast regarded me as to the line of the man that is from on high, or, is to come,” *i. e.* thou hast admitted me into the line of the ancestors, of the man

who is from on high. In the word כְּתוּר, the particle כ has here, as frequently, the same signification as *κατα* in Greek, and the word תוּר, which signifies a string of *pearls*, or *gold* or *silver beads*, is by metonymy well adapted for representing a line of ancestors, or posterity. The translation which we have given is perfectly literal, and is quite applicable to the revelation of the Messiah supposed by Kennicott to be made in these passages to David, both as to his humiliation and exaltation, and to his being the descendant of that monarch.

From the above remarks, which have extended to a greater length than was anticipated, it is hoped that Kennicott's view of this most important prophecy is established. It was, indeed, the conviction of the great light thrown by this interpretation on the prophetical psalms and the other prophetical books regarding the Messiah, which has induced us to enter into the subject so far as we have done. But it is quite unsuitable, in this place, to discuss it fully, and much more to trace its connection with the subsequent prophecies, and to shew how the manner (or state and circumstances) of THE Man was gradually more and more developed by David himself, and the following prophets, until such a variety of traits, descriptions, and circumstances, were given regarding him, that were they all brought together in a well arranged order, they would seem more like a descriptive history, than a series of disjointed oracles. We shall therefore conclude, by requesting the reader to bear in mind, that to one who placed such delight as David did in the study of the law of God, *i. e.* of the Pentateuch, the promise of the great restorer of man's primæval state given at the fall, and the promise to Abraham of this person to be his descendant, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, and the further limitation by Jacob on his death bed of this seed to be of the tribe of Judah, must have taken strong hold on his mind, and prepared him to understand easily the nature and extent of the Revelation made to him by Nathan. But in particular, let him examine carefully the Psalms of that monarch, which refer to this subject, and consider how extremely few, *if any*, are the allusions

which can, without the most extreme force, be in any way applied to the promises regarding Solomon, and he cannot, we think, fail to be convinced, that the prophecy of Nathan, on hearing which David expressed such extreme astonishment at the great and unexpected distinction conferred on him and his family, which appears in the whole of his addresses to God on this occasion, must have been understood by him of his infinitely greater descendant than Solomon, *i. e.* the Messiah: regarding whom he had so many *additional* revelations given him, which he embodied in his Psalms.

We take the liberty of subjoining a strictly literal version of this 7th chapter of 2d Samuel, with the view of exhibiting clearly the whole connexion and force of the prophecy and the reply, and at the same time to shew the advantage gained by a translator, who considers what are called by grammarians the two tenses of the Hebrew verb, as representing the Indicative and Subjunctive moods, and who renders them into the modern languages, by the various tenses of these moods in these languages, according as the context may require—which indeed is done in many cases, but without the observance of any rule, by all modern translators. We have also translated the *Vau*, not as a copulative only, but in the various significations assigned to it by grammarians and lexicographers, according as the context seemed to require—in no instance, however, have we assigned to it any new or unacknowledged meaning, or rendered it so as cannot be justified by many examples.

2 SAM. VII.

And it happened that the King was sitting in his house, and Jehovah had given him rest all around, from all his enemies; then the king said to Nathan the prophet, See now I am dwelling in a house of cedar, and the ark of God dwells between curtains. Then Nathan said to the king, all that is in thine heart do, for Jehovah is with thee.

And it happened in that night, that the word of Jehovah was to Nathan saying, Go and say to my servant, to David,

Thus Jehovah says : whether art thou about to build for me a house for my dwelling, when I willed not to dwell in a house from the day I caused the children of Israel to come up from Egypt, even to this day, but would walk in tent and tabernacle? In all the time I have walked among all the children of Israel, whether have I spoken a word to one of the Rods ^a of Israel, whom I appointed to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not for me a house of cedar? And now, thus shalt thou say unto my servant, to David. Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, I have taken thee from the pastures, from following after the flocks, to be a prince over my people, over Israel, that I might be with thee wherever thou goest, and might cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and might make for thee a great name, as the name of the great ones of the earth, and I have appointed a place for my people, for Israel, and I have planted him, and he dwells in his own place, that he may not more be afraid, and the children of wickedness may not continue to afflict him, as in former times, and as in the times when I appointed judges over my people Israel, and I have caused peace to thee from all thine enemies : And Jehovah makes known to thee, that Jehovah will make a house for thee. When thy days shall be fulfilled and thou liest down with thy fathers, then I cause thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, to arise, and I make his kingdom to be established. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish his kingdom for ever. I will be to him for a father, and he shall be to me for a son, whom in his being bent down, I also will chasten by the rod of men, and by the stripes of the children of man, and my *love*, (*benevolence, good will*) I will not remove from him, as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed from before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom is assured for ever before thee ; thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so spake Nathan to David.

^a Metaphor from the sheperd's crook ; In the parallel passage, 1_Chron. xvii. it is *Judges*.

And it was that David the king went and returned before Jehovah, and said. What am I, O Lord Jehovah, and what is my house, that thou hast conducted me even until now! Nay that seemed but little in thine eyes, O Lord Jehovah, but thou even wast pleased to (*wouldst*) speak as to the house of thy servant, to a remote time! And is this the law of The Man, O Lord Jehovah! And what shall David add yet in speaking unto thee, seeing that thou hast acknowledged (*tried and known*) thy servant, O Lord Jehovah. For the sake of **THY PROMISE**,^a and according to thy heart, hast thou done all this great thing to cause thy servant to be acknowledged. Wherefore thou art great, O Jehovah God: for there is none like unto thee, and there is no God beside thee, as far as we have heard with our ears. And who is like thee, like Israel! a one nation in the earth! which God hath gone to redeem for himself, for a people, and to establish for it a name, and to do for you the great thing, and fearful in thy land, in the sight of thy people, which thou, O God, redeemedst for thyself, from the Egyptian nations, and from their gods! And thou wast pleased to (*wouldst*) establish for thyself, thy people Israel, for a people to thyself for ever, and thou, Jehovah, wilt be to them for a God. And now, Jehovah God, the promise which thou hast promised, regarding thy servant, and regarding his house, establish thou it for ever, and do according as thou hast promised, so that thy name may be great for ever, in its being said, Jehovah of Hosts is God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David, be established before thee. For thou, Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel, hast made a revelation to thy servant, in saying, I will build a house for thee: therefore hath thy servant found heart to pray to thee this prayer. And now, O Lord Jehovah, thou art **THE GOD**, and thy promises shall be faithfulness, when thou wert pleased to (*wouldst*) promise to thy servant this felicity? And now begin to bless the house

^a What *promise* can be here referred to, except the great promise to our first parents at the fall, renewed to Abraham, and confined to the tribe of Judah, by Israel on his deathbed? For it is quite evident that it cannot be referred to the promise immediately before given by the mouth of Nathan.

of thy servant, that it may exist for ever before thee ! For thou, O Lord Jehovah, hast promised, that by thy blessing the house of thy servant shall be blessed for ever.

INDEX OF HEBREW WORDS.

- אבה, אב, Primary signification, *like to a bent reed*, whence is derived
- אב, אב, *a father*, Vol. i. 225.
- אביון, *a poor person*, Ibid.
- אב־אב, *reeds*, Ibid.
- אחרוני, *that should be reckoned among the last*, i. 231.
- אלוה, אלוה, prim. sig. *dreadful : to be deeply revered*, i. 224.
- אניות, *Nautili*, (species of shell fish,) ii. 179.
- ארבה, *a locust*, prim. sig. *greatly multiplying*, i. 231.
- באש, באש, prim. sig., *to be sharp, bitter*, i. 229.
- בטח, prim. sig., *to lie carelessly on the ground*, i. 235.
- בינה, in what signification it sometimes occurs, ii. 274.
- בליעל, the fictitious *Prince of the regions of the dead*, ii. 164.

- גזר and חזר, *he cut*, Vol. i. 228.
- דבר, *to lay snares*, . . . i. 229.
- הדד, *to direct*, . . . i. 224.
- הגיון, a musical word, . . . ii. 190.
- התפאקד, a rare form, . . . i. 231.
- חטא, a more grievous offender, . . . Ibid.
- חכמה, a noun of very extended signification, . . . i. 237, and ii. 274.
- חכמים, has the same meaning, occasionally, as σοφοι among the Greeks, . . . ii. 273.
- חשב, in the meaning of *decreeing, judging*, . . . i. 291, 292.
- ידע, *prim. sig. to lay up*, . . . i. 244.
- ירדן, used as an appellative, . . . i. 239.
- כתובים, what parts of the sacred writings are so called, . . . i. 62.
- מגלות, *prim. sig. rolls*, . . . i. 56, 62.
- נביא, *prim. sig., inspired*, . . . ii. 197.
- נגר, *prim. sig., to boil, to boil over*, . . . i. 224.
- נכר, *prim. sig., to prick, to mark or distinguish by pricks or dots*, . . . i. 221, 226.
- נכת, *to pierce with a spear*, . . . i. 225.
- נציב, *a part, portion*, . . . ii. 121.
- ספר הישר, *Book of Songs*, . . . ii. 186.
- עבד, *to be subjected to the power of another*, . . . i. 261.

- עברים, used as an appellative, Vol. i. 239.
- עוץ, *Ausitis*, . . . ii. 284.
- צדק, صدق, prim. sig., *straight* ;
hence *truth*, . . . i. 224, 229.
- קדקה, صدقة, *goodness, benevolence*,
likewise *virtue* in general, . . . i. 221, 226, 236
—— a *straight road*, . . . i. 235.
- צדיק, an intensive form, . . . i. 231.
- קהלת, the name of an office assumed, ii. 293.
- רהמניות, women *by nature compas-*
sionate, pitiful, . . . i. 231.
- ישאול, the fictitious *region of the dead*,
or *the shades below, (inferi.)* . . . ii. 164.
- שיר המעלות, a *song of return*, . . . ii. 193.
- שוח, שחה, and שחה, prim. sig.
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- שמן, in its signification of *fatness*,
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